MY BOHEMIAN DAYS IN PARIS

JULIUS M. PRICE

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MY BOHEMIAN DAYS IN PARIS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

MY BOHEMIAN DAYS IN LONDON

Illustrated with 32 Drawings made specially for the Volume.

MY BOHEMIAN DAYS IN PARIS

BY

JULIUS M. PRICE
AUTHOR OF "DAME FASHION," ETC.

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À

ALEXANDRE THOMAS

A toi, mon vieil ami, je dédis ces souvenirs des beaux jours de notre jeunesse; tu y retrouveras, mon cher Alexandre, ces parents si tendrement aimés auxquels je crois n'avoir jamais assez temoigné ma profonde reconnaissance.

JULIUS M. PRICE

GIFT
DANIEL LLOYD
AUG. 1964

PREFACE

Although the number of books on Bohemian life of Paris is practically legion, I feel that I owe no apology for venturing to add to the list with my own humble effort; inasmuch as what I have attempted to narrate pertains entirely to my own individual experience during the years I spent as a student in the Ville Lumière. Qui s'excuse s'accuse—is undoubtedly a true axiom, but in this instance my plea will, I hope, be accepted, if only on this ground. In this volume I have recorded the lighter side of the life of a student in Paris in the 'eighties, as I knew it; and although I cannot lay claim to have made any special discoveries or new features I feel that perhaps by reason of my souvenirs being almost entirely personal they may therefore present, now and again, novel aspects of the life in the Quartier. The student world of Paris has always exercised a curious fascination in the imagination of even the most staid of writers. This charm would be inexplicable were it not for the knowledge that, underlying its most tempestuous moods, there exists a substratum of genuine human nature that

effaces, to a great extent, the impression conveyed by its outward free-and-easy characteristics. Behind all the frivolity and levity of the étudiant in Paris there is a camaraderie and esprit de corps which goes far, not only towards inducing enthusiasm for one's work, but also in bringing out the best qualities of manhood. More water has passed under the bridges than I care to realise since as a student I entered the atelier of Gérome, but the memory of those halcyon days still remains: when one's whole life was summed up in a determination to do one's utmost to achieve fame, coincident with a deep affection for one's Alma Mater. Men may come and men may go but the Quartier Latin goes on almost unchanged outwardly, for most of the old landmarks still exist—in fact, one fancies that one sees the same faces, so much does each generation of students resemble the preceding one. The old well-known cafés are still crowded of an evening, and life goes on, year in, year out, in the same happy state of insouciance as it did in days gone by. It is with mixed feelings of pleasure and sadness that one revisits the haunts of one's youth. One is concerned at the thought of how many of those gay, light-hearted boys whom one knew in the atelier have fallen on the road, or gone under in the struggle for existence in the most precarious and fickle of all the professions.

Although outwardly the École presents the

same appearance, one finds that a great innovation has come about, for female students are now admitted, and a special atelier has been opened and reserved for their sole use. This is a great concession, and one of the surest signs of the advance of the times. At present there are fewer English and American students in the painter's studios than formerly, this being in all probability due to the fact that the two most popular maîtres, Gérome and Cabanal, have passed away. Moreover, of late years, many other public studios, under the direction of celebrated men, have been opened in different parts of Paris. At most of these a fee is made for attendance, but this is generally almost nominal. Many foreign students, therefore, already well grounded in the initial stage of their art, prefer to go direct to one of these private ateliers to waiting for admission to the École itself. In spite, however, of these changes, the routine remains practically identical with what it was in my days; for there is no suspicion of rivalry between the studios beyond the kudos of producing the most successful pupils. The unaffected Bohemianism which so helped to enthuse one for one's work still exists as it did then. Class prejudice, and the "cuffs-and-collar brigade," are still unknown, for the "conventional" has no attraction for the student of the Quartier, where high spirits and even eccentricity in every form are winked at

benevolently by the authorities. I had a particularly pleasing instance of this not so long ago, which is perhaps worth recounting. I was piloting a friend who, as an architect, is naturally interested in all matters pertaining to Art, around the artistic haunts in the vicinity of the Rue Bonaparte, when I bethought me to show him a well-known atelier in the Rue du Dragon, where many of the advanced students of the École paint from the life during the afternoon, and where I had myself worked. Not without some little difficulty, as I learned that a nude female model was posing, and only after assuring the doorkeeper that I was an old student, were we permitted to enter. Knowing what pranks might be played on two foreigners by a crowd of lively French students in a studio, I impressed on my friend the importance of appearing as unconcerned as possible. As we strolled round, looking at the amusing cartoons and the clever studies with which the walls were thickly covered, there was a dead silence, although it had been pretty noisy before we entered, and we realised that we were being taken stock of by the twenty odd students working round the model. After a few minutes, someone remarked loudly to his neighbour, and referring to us, of course:

"I think the tall one is the father." To which the other replied: "No, I think the shorter man is the other one's uncle." And then there ensued

a mock conversation, amusing enough in the humorous way in which the simplicity of an "Ollendorf" exercise was sustained.

We continued to walk round as unconcernedly as possible under the fire of badinage. At last the man who had started the chaff said:

"Well, have it which way you please, but I don't think it's good form coming in here with collars and cuffs on this warm afternoon, when we're all so hot and thirsty."

Naturally, I lost no time in taking up this cue, and so, addressing the nearest man to me—a tall, bearded fellow—I asked for the Massier, as the leader of a French atelier is called. This gentleman, upon hearing himself alluded to, came forward, and bowing low with great obsequiousness, inquired in what way he could be of service to our "highnesses." I then explained that I was an old student, and was visiting the studio for the first time after many years. I added that in old times it was customary to "wet" such occasions, and it would give me very much pleasure if I could be permitted to do the same thing now. The Massier replied that my reasoning sounded good, so he asked the students what they thought of it. Their reply was quick and to the point. They immediately voted, amidst much merriment, that the séance should be suspended, whereupon they all rose, and after forming themselves into a sort of procession, we

adjourned to a small café close by, whilst the model, who had slipped on a long coat over her nude form, and had donned a pair of slippers, came along also. All were brimming over with fun and good-fellowship. As soon as the drinks were handed round—and it will be of interest to mention that all had asked for black coffee—one of the men, who was evidently the orator of the studio, rose to his feet, and called out to his companions: "Gentlemen, let us drink to the health of His Most Gracious Majesty the King of England." A toast to which they all responded most heartily. Then someone cried out: "And to the entente cordiale also." Then followed a most charming and unaffected chat, all being much interested in what I, as an ancien, had been doing since I left Paris. Half an hour passed thus, as delightfully as possible, and then someone humorously suggested that the model would catch cold if she stayed out too long, and then they wouldn't be able to finish their painting. I strongly advised them not to run such a risk, so out we all trooped again, and shook hands all round on parting at the entrance of the studio.

This impromptu glimpse of the camaraderie of the Latin Quarter impressed my friend immensely. As he expressed it, it was a revelation to him, and I could well understand it, for nothing of the sort could possibly exist in London.

It is working under such conditions, and in this

atmosphere of unaffected simplicity, that makes the life of the student in Paris so fascinating, and which has provided the theme for so many books on the subject.

In the following reminiscences I have not attempted to gloss over or palliate any of my little indiscretions and "aventures." They are part and parcel of the life of the student in Paris; to have omitted recounting them would be like Hamlet without the ghost, therefore I can lay claim to no monopoly in this respect. My experiences were probably but the counterpart of those of many other students, as there is a terrible lack of originality in all "aventures" where the fair sex is concerned. I can only venture to hope that in my case they may present some new version of an old topic. That the personal pronoun is so much in evidence throughout my narrative is unfortunately inevitable, but I trust any shortcoming in this respect may be forgiven, if only by reason of the fact that in reminiscences of this description it is impossible to write in the third person. I recollect once reading a comic autobiography in which there was a footnote, by the printer, to the effect that he had exhausted all the capital I's, and that he was obliged to use X's instead.

I have done my best to avoid so dire a calamity.

J. M. P.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

I arrive in Paris—The house in the Rue de Reuilly—The Thomases and the Messiers—A bit of old Paris—I go to see Yvon and Gérome—A funny incident—I am accepted at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and received as a pupil in Gérome's studio . 1

CHAPTER II

Looking for lodgings—The Rue Visconti—The concierges—The "hotel" in the Rue de Seine—Visions of romance—I am inscribed at the Beaux Arts—The Cours Yvon—William Stott of Oldham—Introduction to the Quartier Latin . . . 11

CHAPTER III

I leave the Rue de Reuilly—My new quarters—I make a start at the École—The three ateliers de peinture—Gérome's, Cabanel's and Lehmann's—The routine in the Antique—A probationer—My fair neighbour in the Rue de Seine—A disillusion—Working hours of Paris as compared with London—The goûter—Types of students—French, English, and American—A stroll after work—Week-ends en famille—The house in the Parc des Princes at Auteuil—Practical joking—An incident at the Théâtre des Italiens—The fête at Versailles—An interesting experience 19

CONTENTS

CHAPTER IV

PAGE

I am passed for the atelier—My entrée—The Massier—Paying my footing—An impromptu picnic—"Ragging" the nouveau—A duel with paint-brushes—The corvée—A little unpleasantness—A studio procession in the Quartier—Models—The visits of the "Patron"—An amusing incident—Sympathy between the artist and his pupils—Gérome's kindly nature 40

CHAPTER V

Déjeuner in the Quartier—Thirions—Curious incident in the Rue du Four—Arlequins à 2 sous—A joke on the waiter—Copying at the Louvre—Julians—The atelier in the Rue d'Uzès 54

CHAPTER VI

The Quartier at night—The Boulevard St Michel—Petites ouvrières—A good joke and its dénouement—Practical joking in the streets—The woman on the roof—Searching for a louis—The cafés in the Quartier—Bullier—A conjuring trick—Joke on the cocher—Fun at the waxwork show . 60

CHAPTER VII

My first love affair—Rose—Excursion to Meudon—Robinson—Fontenay aux Roses—A friture at Suresnes—La Grenouillère—Amusing incident in a restaurant—Practical joke in a studio—I leave for London—Farewell dinner with Rose—A last letter—End of my first love affair . . . 73

CONTENTS

CHAPTER VIII

PAGE

I return to Paris—Looking for new quarters—The Rue de la Rochefoucauld—Buying furniture—The Baronne d'Ange—First night in my new room—Curious incident—The restaurant in the Rue Vivienne—Eugénie—A rendezvous—A disappointment—My first sale of a picture—The petit rentier—I am commissioned to paint a portrait—A worrying sitter 85

CHAPTER IX

I am introduced at the Café de la Rochefoucauld—The habitués of the café—Distinguished men one met there—A Whistler anecdote—Petites dames—Models—La Sagatore—La Belle Laure and her tragic ending—English girls at the café and a joke on one of them—A favourite with the ladies—A witty remark—Stray clients at the café—The end of the Café de la Rochefoucauld—Bohemianism and some curious predicaments—Humorous situation 94

CHAPTER X

Cafés in Montmartre—The Nouvelles Athènes—The Rat Mort—The Place Blanche—Amusing experience—An incident on the Place Pigalle—The Abbaye de Thélème—The Elysée Montmartre—The Moulin de la Galette—The fast women in the Rue Bréda and the Quartier de Notre Dame de Lorette—Brasseries and cafés—The frail sisterhood—The underworld of Montmartre—The artists' colony—Studios—Artists' models on the Place Pigalle—The studio district—The inception of the Cabaret du Chat Noir—Rodolphe Salis "Gentilhomme Cabaretier"—Removal of the

CONTENTS

PAGE

Cabaret to the Rue de Laval—Remarkable procession—A midnight escapade—Artistic surroundings of the "Chat Noir"—The theatre—Famous productions—Array of talent—Great success of the cabaret—Imitation "Chat Noirs"—The Lion d'Or—New school of decoration 110

CHAPTER XI

Commission to paint portrait of Monsieur Thomas for the Salon—I make a start—A studio in the Rue de Reuilly—Amusing episode—The portrait finished—"Sending-in" day—"Accepted"—A little dinner to celebrate event—A funny incident—The lady and the lion—The Vernissage at the Salon—Coveted invitations—The eventful day—The scene outside the Palais de l'Industrie—The search for one's picture—The crowd—Smart people—Déjeuner at Ledoyens—The scene in the Sculpture Hall after lunch—A drive in the Bois and a bock at the Cascade 127

CHAPTER XII

I move to the Rue Fontaine St Georges—I am commissioned to paint the portrait of Madame Thomas—Buying more furniture—A house-warming—Amusing jeu d'esprit—I take a studio with a friend—The Passage Lathuille—A bad neighbourhood—Low rental—Studio furniture—Lady visitors—Impromptu lunches—The amateur model—An amusing experience—Attractive personality of the average female model—"Wrong uns"—Earnings of models—Faux ménages—Long "collages"—Cat-and-dog existence—Middle-aged ex-models—The morals of the ancienne cocotte—How a collage usually commences—An artistic anecdote—Coolness of Frenchmen nowadays—An incident in a café—Mon amie in the Rue Frochot—Laughable incident—A lapse of memory 139

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XIII

PAGE

The Bal des Quatz Arts—Difficulty of obtaining ticket—My costume—Rendezvous at café—Indelicate costumes of ladies—Starting for the Elysée Montmartre—Sergents de ville guarding entrance—Stringent precautions—Impressions of ballroom scene—Gorgeous costumes of men—Distinguished painters—Nude girls—Blatant indecency of diaphanous evening dresses—Extraordinary spectacle—Wild dancing and deafening music—I meet a little model—Her costume—Processions of different ateliers—Wonderful effects—Supper served—The danse du ventre on one of the tables—No drunkenness a feature of the ball—Procession of students to Quartier Latin in morning—Arrest of a nude girl in street—True hospitality . . 156

CHAPTER XIV

Visit to the district of Fontainebleau—Marlotte—The village—The open-air painters—The village inn—The panels in the salle à manger—Painting everywhere—The forest—The main street—Food at the hotel—The petit vin—The table d'hôte—The people one met—Cheery crowd—Billiards—"Le jeu au bouchon"—O de Penne celebrated painter of sporting pictures—His maîtresse—Their marriage—His house and bedroom—Ciceri, the landscape painter—His knowledge of women—"Her old man's day"—The daily routine in Marlotte—A new arrival—A radiant vision—The chic Parisienne—A new acquaintance—L'Inconnue—The commencement of a love story—Delightful days—A shock—The end of the romance 170

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XV

PAGE

Another incident at Marlotte—The American artist—A caricature after dinner—A mysterious departure—An unpleasant surprise for Marlotte—My caricature at the Préfecture de Police—Lost in the Palace of Fontainebleau—Exciting adventure—Unpopularity—An amusing joke 190

CHAPTER XVI

A visit to Moret—Funny adventure on way to station—A good-natured Frenchman—Willing hands—Arrival at station—Amusement of bystanders—Lost belongings—Incident in carriage—Disagreeable passenger—No smoking—A whistling story—Another smoking story—The bully and the bantam—A curious military incident at the Gare St Lazare—Moret and its surroundings—Lolling as a fine art 203

CHAPTER XVII

Changing characteristics of Montmartre—Advent of music—The Divan Japonais—The opening night—A merry evening—The orchestra—The audience oblige on the piano—An impromptu dance—Going round Montmartre—A "chinois sur le zinc"—The garçon de marchand de vins—An unexpected musical talent—The garçon becomes a great pianist—Christmas in Montmartre—A party in studio in the Rue Bochard de Saron—Artistic arrangements—I give an impromptu ventriloquial entertainment—Extraordinary effect—"All's well that ends well"—Another incident—A duel by arrangement — Drawing lots — An unexpected climax 216

CONTENTS

CHAPTER XVIII

PAGE

Some strange examples of Bohemianism—The hidden treasure—An unexpected meeting after several years—A pathetic story—The dead child—Another incident—A bad-tempered, jealous woman and a meek artist—The worm turns at last—A dramatic ending to collage—Perverted Bohemianism—The young student and the married woman—Ruin and disgrace—The usurers of the Quartier Latin—Their hunting-ground and their agents—The spider and the fly—Speculative risks of money-lenders—Cherchez la femme—Contrast between Paris and London—Student life 230

CONCLUSION

Bohemian life in Paris—The charm of the café—Gradual change in one's tastes—The chez soi—Progress in one's work—New friends—Forced to return to England—A final visit to Gérome . 260

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Portrait of the Author in 1886. From a painting by Solomon J. Solomon, R.A. . *Frontispiece*

It was usually a question as to which was the least dilapidated and dirty 12

The concierges varied as much as the rooms . . . 14

A little place in the Rue de Buci 17

Across the road to the marchand de vin for goûter . 24

The types of students varied curiously 26

In a very few minutes they were both covered with colour and in a hideous mess 44

Used to come round of a morning with a case of brushes and colours 50

J. L. Gérome 52

The Louvre, where there was an atmosphere of hard work 58

It was often quite amusing 68

Rose 74

And I was more in love with her than ever . . . 76

His appearance of intense respectability 90

One of the girls was very pretty, fair hair, nice teeth, good figure, blue eyes 102

They were dancers at the Folies Bergères . . . 106

At the café 112

The whole district was full of women and their souteneurs 116

The women sat at the tables in gloomy silence . . 120

At the "Chat Noir" 124

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

My first exhibited picture. (Portrait of Monsieur I. Thomas. Paris Salon, 1881) 136

Models 142

Stood irresolute before me where I sat at my easel . 146

A very sympathetic and attractive personality . . 148

As here and there a pair of bare legs or a snowy neck and shoulders passed through 160

Those diaphanous evening dresses 164

Either painting or strolling about in the weirdest of garbs 172

Full of his own conceit 174

As though in a dream 188

In the evenings we generally managed to put in a cheery time going round to the different cafés . . . 218

She was of so jealous a nature 240

These arrivés who in their time were amongst the most devil-may-care spirits of the Quartier . . . 260

MY BOHEMIAN DAYS IN PARIS

CHAPTER I

I arrive in Paris—The house in the Rue de Reuilly—The Thomases and the Messiers—A bit of old Paris—I go to see Yvon and Gérome—A funny incident—I am accepted at the École des Beaux Arts and received as a pupil in Gérome's studio.

It is a grand thing to be young and on the right side of twenty, but unfortunately one does not realise it till long afterwards, when it is too late; not that it would make much difference I suppose if one did, for one cannot put old heads on young shoulders—still it is curious how lightly one unconsciously takes life when one is on the threshold of it. When the years stretch away in front of one through a long vista of hope and ambition bathed in the radiant sunshine of youth—why should one worry about disappointments and rough times that may perchance be awaiting one. Vive la vie is the device on the banner of youth—and always

will be. I was perhaps no more philosophical in those early days of my career than the average youth, but I was endowed with a strong perception of the romantic side of things, and I can well recollect how delightful were my impressions when I found myself in the train en route for Paris with the prospect of several years of student life before me. Buoyed up with the enthusiasm of my years, the journey appeared to me like the realisation of a dream, and I felt like some bold adventurer of old setting forth to make my fortune.

I was, however, leaving London under sad conditions—both my parents having died a short time previously; but some old friends of my father were ready to welcome me, so I found a delightful home waiting me in their midst. I shall never forget those early days, and have often since wondered whether an English family would have received a raw youth, a foreigner—and quite a stranger to them—with such open-hearted and affectionate hospitality and sympathy as was shown me by these kindly French people; had I been of their own kith and kin I could not have found more goodwill. Fortunately for me, I already spoke French rather well, and I had a thorough knowledge of it, as I had spent a couple of years in a school in Brussels—and this therefore helped a good deal to remove the diffidence I should have doubtless felt amongst strangers had I not been able to converse with them with ease. This, combined with

a good constitution, a fine appetite, and a very limited exchequer, constituted the sum-total of my available assets. I must not, however, forget to add that I had brought with me a parcel of drawings and sketches and a letter of introduction to Adolphe Yvon, the celebrated painter of military subjects and Professor at the École des Beaux Arts.

My time for the first few days after my arrival in Paris was spent in a luxury which was no doubt ill-fitted to prepare me for the rough times when I should be looking after myself on my very slender allowance; still it was indeed very pleasant. My friends were wealthy people. Monsieur Messier, a retired manufacturer of couleurs pour papiers peints, lived with his wife in a beautiful villa at Auteuil in the Parc des Princes, where they entertained with princely hospitality; his son-in-law, Monsieur Isidore Thomas, his successor in the business, managed the factory, which was situated in the Rue de Reuilly, a thoroughfare off the revolutionary Faubourg St Antoine. He and his wife and their little son Alexandre lived at the "Fabrique."

This factory was quite unique in itself, and probably the last of its kind in Paris. It was a relic of the past, when the maître lived amongst his ouvriers and took a paternal interest in their affairs. Once through the lofty porte-cochère leading from the street one found oneself trans-

planted as it were into the provinces, so sudden and unexpected was the change. The factory, which was surrounded by high walls, formed a big quadrangle, in the centre of which stood the house of the maître in the midst of a veritable oasis of fine old trees; around it was a large garden of several acres in extent, in which fruit and vegetables were grown in abundance. It was difficult at first to realise that one was actually in Paris whilst seated at déjeuner or dinner on the lawn.

Monsieur Thomas was a handsome and genial giant of about forty-five years of age, and both he and his wife were the very personification of good-nature and human kindness. Both were gifted with a rare sense of humour which still further helped to make the house in Rue de Reuilly a delightful abode.

But I was in Paris to work hard—not to play, and although I could have prolonged my stay with them indefinitely, I was anxious to make a start. The first thing to be done was to present my letter of introduction to Yvon, as on his verdict depended my admission to the École des Beaux Arts—where I hoped to continue my studies; so off I went one day, accompanied by Monsieur Thomas.

Yvon lived in the Rue de la Tour at Passy—in a big barn of a house particularly bourgeois in appearance. We were received in the atelier by the celebrated painter, a stout, bearded man—of

slovenly appearance—his hair and general appearance so unkempt as to give one the impression he had not washed since he got up—yet it was close on midday; this untidiness was, I recollect, still further accentuated by his costume, which merely consisted of a red flannel shirt and a pair of very loose trousers, which looked like dropping down at any moment, as he wore no braces or belt. Altogether he did not impress me, young as I was. He received us in a somewhat pompous manner, which did not go well with his appearance; still, after reading the letter and looking at the work I had brought with me, he told Monsieur Thomas that I might join his afternoon cours de dessin at the École—and then sat down and wrote a letter for me to present to the famous artist Gérome who had one of the three ateliers de peinture at the École.

"If he will take him as his élève he will have nothing further to worry about," he said to Monsieur Thomas. "Let him show him this drawing when you go," picking out one of the roll I had brought with me.

As we took our leave after thanking him for his kindness he seemed to suddenly throw off his reserve of manner, and shaking me cordially by the hand he told me that he expected me to call on him on Sundays whenever I had any special work to show him to ask his advice about. "I expect all my élèves to do this," he added.

It would have been impossible to have started under better auspices, and Monsieur Thomas—the dear old fellow—was if anything even more delighted than I was, and as we returned to Paris he already congratulated me on my future successes. The next step then was to go to see Gérome, who lived in the Boulevard de Clichy. At that time he was at the zenith of his fame, and his name was a household word not only in France but all over the world. Monsieur Thomas was very much impressed at the idea of our calling on such a celebrity—much more in fact that when we went to see Yvon. I remember he got himself up specially for the occasion as though we were going to a wedding—a new tall hat, light grey trousers, lavender kid gloves, a resplendent tie. We arrived at the house, and on his announcing with a certain amount of pride to the concierge that we had a letter of introduction to the maître we were simply told to go upstairs by ourselves and that we would find him in the studio. There was an entire lack of formality—so up we went.

The house was exquisitely furnished—the staircase was richly carpeted, and the walls were covered with Eastern tapestries and trophies, whilst oriental lamps hung from the ceiling. It was indeed the house of a great painter, and to me, a youngster unused to such artistical splendour, it was like a dream of the Arabian nights. We made our way upstairs in awed silence. There was not

a soul about, so we paused at the different landings to furtively glance in at the gorgeous apartments. By the time we reached the top floor Monsieur Thomas, who was a portly man, was puffing audibly; he wasn't accustomed to stair climbing, although it was only the third floor, and as it was a hot day the perspiration was pouring down his face. There was only one door on the top landing so he knocked timidly in case this wasn't the atelier—no reply—he knocked again louder—a voice seemingly from far away called out " Entrez donc." We entered and found ourselves on the threshold of an immense studio; right away in the distance was a grey-haired gentleman of military appearance seated before an easel, palette and brushes in hand, whilst a model in an Eastern costume was posing on a platform in front of him. In between us and where he sat was an immense expanse of polished floor which looked as slippery as ice. We both stood on the edge of it in the doorway, irresolute as to what we ought to do.

" Mais entrez donc, mes amis," called out the artist benevolently, seeing our hesitation.

Monsieur Thomas to my surprise then attempted some impossible feat of balancing his hat, gloves, and umbrella in the corner of the door, whilst fumbling in his pocket for the letter of introduction. Then the inevitable happened, as he was not a born juggler—the hat and umbrella skidded on the

polished floor, then fell down, and rolled out into the studio, and in endeavouring to regain them he nearly came to grief himself on the treacherous surface. I had the greatest difficulty in preventing myself from bursting out laughing, so funny did he look. This interlude would have probably continued some time had not Gérome, who had meanwhile taken off his pince-nez and was looking on with an amused air, called out laughingly, " Don't worry about your belongings, they won't hurt on the floor."

Monsieur Thomas pulled himself together, wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead, and we made our way gingerly across the atelier.

" Une lettre de mon ami Yvon à propos de ce jeune homme, voyons ça," said the maître genially as he opened the letter of introduction. " Well," he continued, turning to Monsieur Thomas after he had read it, " what has he brought to show me in the shape of his work? "

With much trepidation I undid the drawing from the antique which Yvon had suggested my bringing. It was one which the Royal Academy in London had not considered good enough to admit me as a student in the school of that august institution. I felt that my whole future practically depended on the opinion he passed on it. He put on his glasses and examined it critically—the next few seconds seemed interminable—then he exclaimed, " Mais ça n'est pas mal du tout," and

turning to my friend, whom he evidently thought was my guardian, he added, " Je le prendrai chez moi "; then he went over to his bureau and wrote out some instructions as to what I had to do—where to present myself, and so forth. The whole interview had not lasted ten minutes.

Emboldened by his friendliness, I then ventured to produce a water-colour drawing I had made up the river, and which I was particularly satisfied with. It was an evening effect—with a harvest moon reflected in the water. Very original and poetical I thought. I remember I called it " The moon is up and yet it is not night." But it wasn't to be all compliments, for he let me down with a run when he said briefly after a glance at it, " C'est un peu plat d'épinards " (It looks rather like a dish of spinach); adding, " You must put aside your paint-box for the present and continue to work from the antique—le dessin c'est l'essentiel avant tout—don't think of decorating the house until the walls are up." Then rising from his seat to signify that that was an end of it, he shook me warmly by the hand saying, " Alors vous voila lancé, mon ami—ayez du courage, travaillez ferme et ça ira." The unaffected simplicity and charm of his manner went to my very heart.

As we came down the stairs I was in so wild a state of excitement that I felt as though walking on air—for was not my career in my own hands henceforth? Accepted by Gérome and Yvon,

naught now remained but to get to work and stick at it for all I was worth.

It may be of interest to mention that there was not a penny piece to pay for all these advantages. From this moment I was practically on the same footing as the French students, and could remain at the École as long as I pleased.

Now came the important question of finding lodgings.

CHAPTER II

Looking for lodgings—The Rue Visconti—The concierges—The " hotel " in the Rue de Seine—Visions of romance—I am inscribed at the Beaux Arts—The Cours Yvon—William Stott of Oldham—Introduction to the Quartier Latin.

THE artistic life of Paris in those days was divided into two camps as it were. The younger men generally were to be found in the Latin Quarter in the neighbourhood of the École des Beaux Arts —whilst the men of maturer years who had finished with the schools had mostly chosen the heights of Montmartre for their studios. The two groups were therefore widely separated. Nowadays it is very different, the two areas having spread considerably, and the districts round Montparnasse and the Parc Monceau are full of artists. From the student point of view the vicinity of the Rue Bonaparte was the best place in Paris to live in, as it was near the École and the Louvre—so I was advised to look for a room somewhere round about there. Of course my friend and mentor, Monsieur Thomas, accompanied me in my search; whether he thought I was too young to be allowed to hunt round for myself, or that he and his wife

feared I might fall into bad company, did not transpire, but at any rate he gave up several days of his valuable time to help me fix myself up. I could not have had a more delightful companion—although old enough to be my father, he had the temperament of a boy, and thoroughly enjoyed everything, even, I verily believe, to climbing up the steep stairs in the old houses—for cheap rooms, such as I was looking for, were invariably close to the roof.

Of variety and choice there was no end—even at the very moderate rent I was only able to give; the difficulty was to make up my mind. It was usually a question as to which was the least dilapidated and dirty—the sanitation being always such that the less said about it the better. I suppose there could have been no city in Europe in those days where less attention was paid to this subject. Apart though from such trifles as these, there were often other peculiarities about these old rooms for which I was not prepared to pay. I remember one place in the Rue Visconti—a narrow thoroughfare off the Rue Bonaparte—a fine old house, as it had evidently been the mansion of an aristocrat in bygone times. The room to let was not very high up—only on the second floor; it was very large and looked over an expanse of garden—a somewhat unusual thing to find in the Quartier Latin. It appeared to be altogether just what I wanted—plenty of light and air; still it was very, very old

"IT WAS USUALLY A QUESTION AS TO WHICH WAS THE LEAST DILAPIDATED AND DIRTY."

indeed, and also, to put it mildly, somewhat smelly, and there was a peculiar odour about it which I did not then know, but which became quite familiar after a little while in Paris. I at first thought it was because the window had been closed for some days, till I happened to notice something on the wall by the bed, which was in an alcove. I drew my friend's attention to it. He laughingly remarked to the concierge that the room although to let was " déjà habitée."

" Oh," she replied, with a shrug of her shoulders, " that's nothing—a sou's worth of insecticide a day and they'd never worry him much."

As I had come to Paris to study Art, not entomology, I thought I wouldn't chance it—one subject at a time would be sufficient. I was sorry, though, as it was a delightful old place—architecturally, I mean. The majority of the rooms we saw looked as though they'd never had a coat of paint or fresh wall-paper since the house was built, and one required to be very young and full of enthusiasm for work to make up one's mind to live in such dirt. In some of these I recollect the windows did not look out on the street or even the courtyard, but actually got their light and air from the grimy staircase; these were often known as " logements de garçon." Still they were cheap, and that was the principal desiratum from the average student's point of view. At one place twelve francs a month was all that was asked for

one of these gloomy logements, and "furnished" at that.

The concierges varied as much as the rooms. Sometimes she would be a motherly sort of woman who would accompany us cheerfully even to the sixth floor, dilating the while on the advantages the house offered, till you almost felt that it would be unkind not to take the room. At others the janitor would be a terrible sort of person, before whom one had to present oneself with all humility, asking as a favour to be informed what there was to let—and then if it suited her august convenience she would perhaps condescend to show us. I may here mention that it does not require a very lengthy residence in Paris to discover that one's peace of mind practically depends on the temperament of one's concierge. I was somewhat fortunate in this respect, as I came across some very civil and decent ones; but the majority, from what I heard and saw of them, were gossiping, mischief-making hussies who struck terror into the soul of the unfortunate individual who was not ready to the very moment with his rent. However, revenons à nos moutons.

We were both tired out and sick of going up and down steep stairs when I happened to spot a "hotel" we had not noticed before, in the Rue de Seine. Yes, they had a room to let, fortunately for me as they seemed very civil people. Would we like to see it? It was on the first floor—that

"THE CONCIERGES VARIED AS MUCH AS THE ROOMS."

seemed all right. So up we went. It was not a large room, but the window opened on to a wide sort of terrace overlooking the street—ideal for a breath of air in the summer, I thought. Two adjoining rooms also opened on to the terrace.

We were discussing the rent, which was a little higher than I wanted to give, when I suddenly saw a very pretty hand and arm appear at one of the windows on the terrace, and arrange the curtains which had blown out with the breeze. Visions of one of those romances of Paris I had read at once flashed through my mind—I was determined to have the room even if it did cost me more than I ought to pay. To the surprise of my friend I said without any further hesitation that I thought it would suit me, and that I'd take it at once—so it was settled that I should take possession as soon as I liked. As we came downstairs Monsieur Thomas asked me why I had made up my mind so quickly.

" The terrace decided me," I replied.

" Perhaps you are right—it will give you a little more air; but a deal depends on what your neighbours are like."

The room, I should add, was furnished, such as it was, not luxuriously perhaps, but quite as well as anything I had seen hitherto; at any rate, I was now fixed up—if I didn't like it later I could always look for something else.

When we got back to the Rue de Reuilly my

good friends simply overwhelmed me with advice as to what and what not to do, and even went so far as to arrange every item of my daily expenditure to a centime almost. At the same time, they drew such a picture of the many pitfalls and temptations which were about to beset me in my new life, that I really began to feel quite nervous as to what was likely to happen to me. However, the feeling arose that I was now a student of the Quartier Latin and on my own, so I did not let myself become unduly depressed by their pessimistic though good-natured warnings. At the same time I must confess it—there was still in my mind the recollection of the vision of female loveliness I had caught the glimpse of at the window on the terrace.

Fortunately Monsieur Thomas had not seen it —or I fancy his advice would have been somewhat different, as I was a youngster at that time; whilst as to what Madame Thomas would have said had she known what was in my mind, I don't like to think, although they were neither of them the least bit narrow-minded or strait-laced.

The following day I found my way to the École des Beaux Arts and presented my letter from Gérome at the bureau. I was then duly inscribed on the books and presented with an oval-shaped card on which was written my name, nationality, age, and address, together with the atelier to which I was admitted as an élève. The porter then

A LITTLE PLACE IN THE RUE DE BUCI.

obligingly indicated where the Cours Yvon was held, and the big hall full of casts from the antique where I had been told by Gérome to commence my studies. Making my way there, and whilst having a look round and wondering what I had better do to make a start, I suddenly heard myself addressed in English by a burly young fellow who was making a drawing close by.

"You're a new-comer, aren't you? Who are you with?"

"Gérome," I replied, with much pride.

"That's lucky," he answered, "so am I. What's your name? Mine is Stott—William Stott of Oldham. I'll take you round and show you what you've got to do—it will save you a lot of time finding it all out by yourself."

So we had a stroll through the hall and the courtyard, and in a very short time were quite pals, and then he suggested our going to have a cup of coffee and a smoke at a little place in the Rue de Buci which was the rendezvous then of many budding artists. Thus my introduction to student life in the Quartier was quite a delightful experience to me. As we sat chatting and comparing notes, as it were, and discussing our mutual plans for the future, I already realised the curious fascination of the free Bohemian life of Paris—and could conceive how largely it is instrumental in bringing out individuality and self-reliance by fostering enthusiasm for one's work. These

informal gatherings in the cafés of the Quartier were the means of bringing together in friendly relationship men who would otherwise perhaps not have met at all outside the atelier.

We afterwards had a stroll round, talking of painting, and ending by discovering we had some mutual friends in England; then, as I was in no particular hurry to get home, we dined together in a little restaurant in the Rue St Bénôit crowded with students, and where Stott seemed to know everybody from the patron downwards. The dinner was a very decent one considering it cost only 1.25 vin compris, for Stott like myself was not overburdened with wealth—in fact he explained to me that he had to be pretty careful when it was getting towards the end of the month; besides which, as he said, there were other things more amusing than food to spend one's money on. It was not long before I realised that also.

CHAPTER III

I leave the Rue de Reuilly—My new quarters—I make a start at the École—The three ateliers de peinture—Gérome's, Cabanel's and Lehmann's—The routine in the Antique—A probationer—My fair neighbour in the Rue de Seine—A disillusion—Working hours of Paris as compared with London—The goûter—Types of students—French, English, and American—A stroll after work—Week-ends en famille—The house in the Parc des Princes at Auteuil—Practical joking—An incident at the Théâtre des Italiens—The fête at Versailles—An interesting experience.

It was with considerable misgiving that I dragged myself away from the delightful house in the Rue de Reuilly, although it was arranged that I should always spend my week-ends either at Auteuil or with the Thomases. I felt a lump in my throat when the time came for me to be leaving; it seemed to me that I was on the threshold of a new life, and that my boyhood was over. Hitherto I had lived at home, where I had no worries or responsibilities, but henceforth I was to be practically dependent on my own individual resources. Not unnaturally I felt a certain diffidence, but I pulled myself together and determined to get on if it lay in my power to do so. My room in the

Rue de Seine seemed particularly dreary and poverty-stricken after the luxury I had been accustomed to, and the few personal belongings I possessed appeared but a sorry lot when they were brought upstairs. There was however naught for it but to make the best of the situation, so I unpacked and then made my way to the École, where Stott had promised to meet me.

Under his guidance it did not take long to get into the routine of the work. All new-comers, however much experience they might have had previously, were obliged to start in the "antique." This was obligatory. All that was necessary in the shape of equipment were a chair and a stool, a cardboard portfolio to hold one's paper and serve also as drawing-board, some charcoal, and, most necessary of all to the novice, stale bread to rub out with. (It would be interesting to know how much bread is used in a year by beginners.)

There were three ateliers de peinture at the École—Gérome's, Cabanel's, and Lehmann's. They were all situated on the first floor, and entirely distinct from one another, but in the novitiate stage, when drawing in the antique, everyone worked in the big hall where he pleased.

The Patron, as one's master was affectionately termed, visited his atelier twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, and after inspecting the painters, he would come through the antique to look at the work of his new pupils. As

soon as he entered, it was customary to stand up by one's easel, as otherwise he would not know which were his élèves amongst the crowd at work. His visit did not usually occupy more than a few minutes. A few words of encouragement—or the reverse—and one was left to one's own devices, to work hard or otherwise—as one chose.

Every now and then, when there was room in the atelier, a sort of informal concours was held for admittance, and a certain number of drawings selected. Until then one was only a probationer and could not go upstairs even to visit a friend in the atelier. It may be imagined, therefore, how eagerly one looked forward to getting out of the first stage; but it was long and heart-breaking, for, under the French system, all previous notions of drawing had to be changed. Still, experience helped considerably to shorten one's time in the antique; it was different to being an absolute beginner. Whilst working downstairs, therefore, one could do practically as one pleased, work or play—as for the matter of that was the case in the atelier, but there was none of the incentive and enthusiasm one found later when painting from the life. The antique was the drudgery of the training, but everyone had been through it at the École by the time he went into the atelier. You were not supposed to even possess a paint-box till you could draw—such was the thoroughness of the system; straightforward, broad draughtsmanship

with none of the superfluous detail and finish which was required of the student in those days by the Royal Academy in London. I had already done a considerable amount of drawing from the cast before I went to Paris, so it did not appear quite so tedious to me; still I had not thought I should have to go through it all again.

Later in the afternoon I went to the Cours Yvon, which was held in an amphitheatre of the École. In those days only a very limited number of élèves were allowed, so I could consider myself fortunate in having been accepted. Here, at any rate, was a break from the monotony of the antique, as the class was held simply for rapid drawing from the life; but it was a very serious affair, and no talking whatever was permitted.

I was up betimes the following morning, not entirely because I wanted to get down to the School early, but in the hope of catching a glimpse of my fair neighbour before I went out. I opened my window, when, to my annoyance, I saw a big, bearded individual in scanty attire leaning over the rail smoking a pipe. I was wondering if he was the occupant of the room on the other side of mine, when he was joined by a fat, fair woman of uncertain age, and not the least attractive in appearance, in a loose peignoir, who came from the room which, in my mind's eye, I had pictured as containing the elements of a romance. This was the owner of the arm and hand that had con-

jured in my youthful imagination such visions of female loveliness and romance. I felt very disappointed, but as my room was really not uncomfortable and very conveniently situated, I consoled myself with the thought that I might have been worse off elsewhere, and that, as I was not going to be indoors very often, it didn't much matter—all of which was doubtless very philosophical. I remember I told Stott about it, and he roared with laughter, and said it was the richest thing he'd heard for a long time, my jumping at the room on the sight of a plump arm at the next window.

"Never mind, old man," he added, "you'll probably have lots of new neighbours if you stay there long enough, so better luck next time."

But this couple had evidently got a lease of their room, for they were still there when I left. My neighbour on the other side of the terrace turned out to be a student—a young Hungarian—with whom I got to be on rather friendly terms. My home surroundings were, therefore, of the most prosaic and unromantic character for the moment.

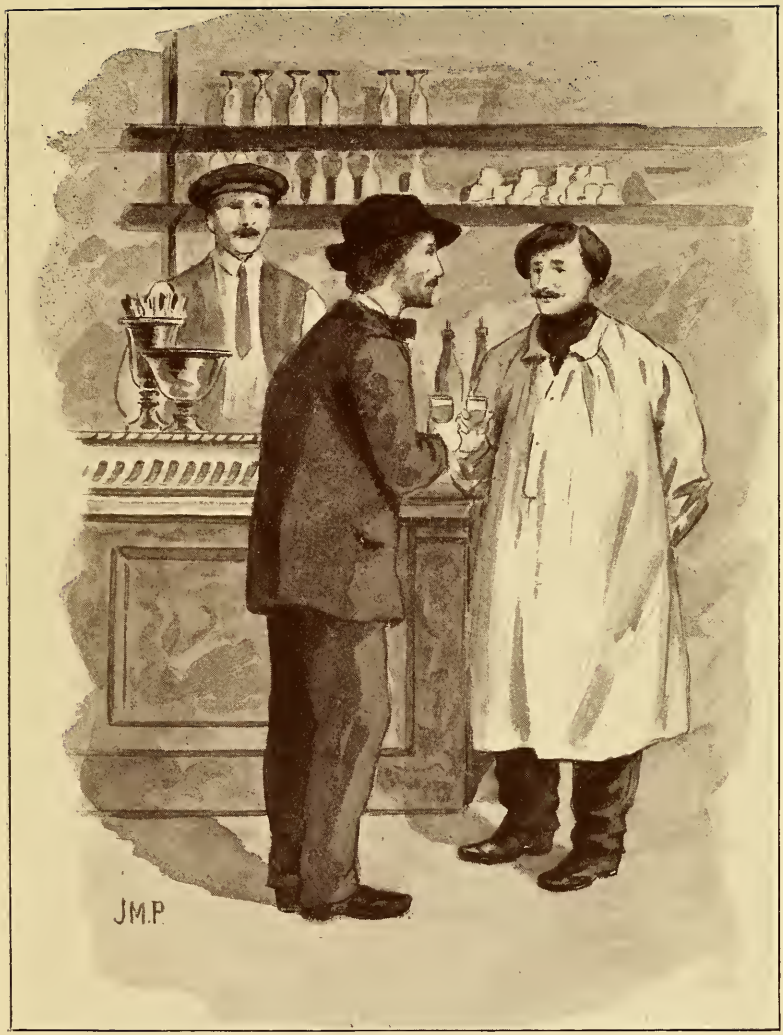
In Paris the day practically begins two hours ahead of London, and although there was no fixed hour for starting work in the antique, one unconsciously got into the habit of commencing as early as possible, so by eight o'clock in the summer one had already got into full swing.

I soon found my way about the Quartier. There was a little crémerie close by, where one got a bowl

of excellent coffee and a roll for thirty centimes. This, at half-past seven, constituted breakfast; at ten, Stott and I used to knock off for a little while and go across the road to the marchand de vin for goûter, which consisted of a glass of white wine and a croissant. This cost another thirty centimes; and this goûter made a welcome break in the long morning. For déjeuner, there was the choice of several little cheap restaurants round about, where one could suit one's meal—not to one's appetite, that would never have done—but to one's purse; then after a coffee and a cigarette, back to the School to work all the afternoon.

It was hard and monotonous, but buoyed up with the thought that it would not be long before one got into the atelier, the days passed quick enough. I recollect the envy with which one looked on the men who were working upstairs—bearded, long-haired fellows in all manner of fantastic garb, with slouch hats rakishly worn, cigarette on lip, and big paint-boxes slung by a strap on their shoulders. These men to our eyes were what were known as "arrivés," and we all hoped to be like them some day.

The types of students varied curiously, and formed quite a study in itself. There were three categories. The "rapins," or veriest beginners—youths who looked like a drawing by Gavarni, and affected a "get-up" which they fondly imagined proved them to be born artists—



"ACROSS THE ROAD TO THE MARCHAND DE VIN FOR GOÛTER."

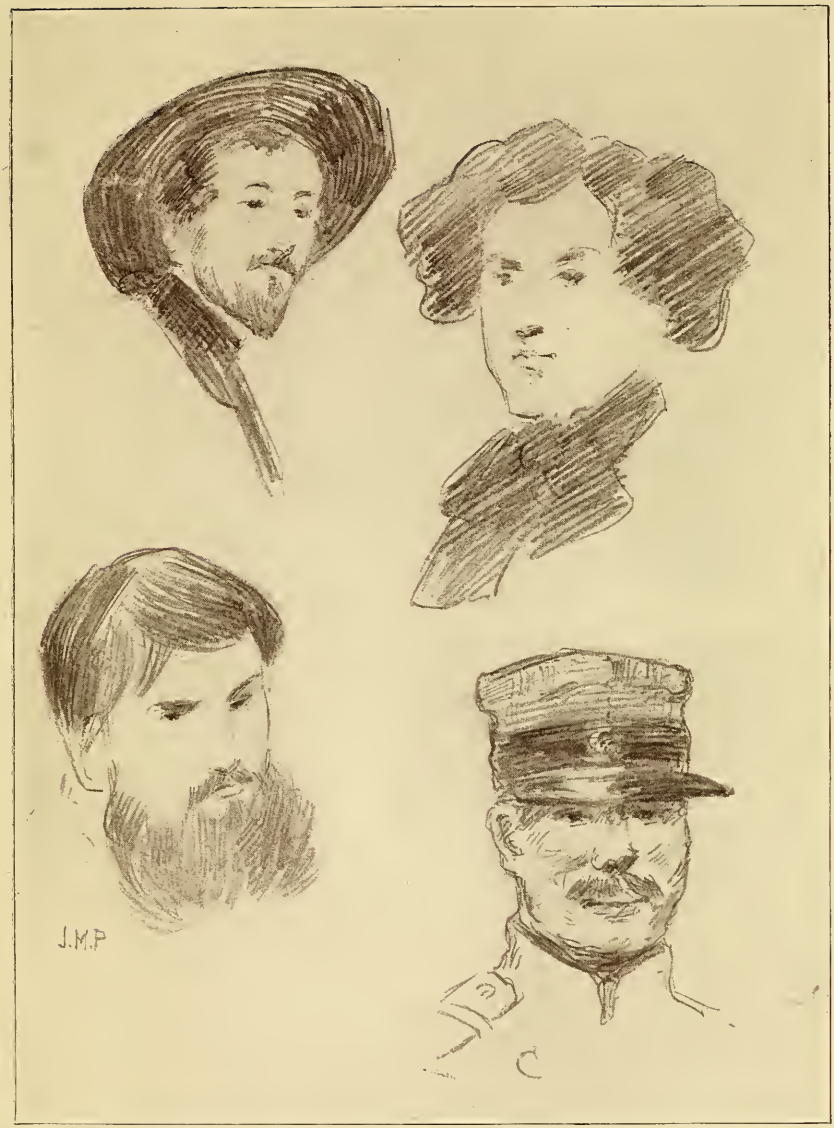
long hair cut à la Leonardo da Vinci, flat-brimmed, black, sombrero hats, enormous bow ties, velvet coats, and pegtop trousers. These fellows were always talking Art, and laying down their views on it, whilst running down the works of all the great old masters of any school, indiscriminately. It was condescension on their part to even admit there were any artists before their own advent in the world. Then there were the "poseurs"—most insufferable snobs—who would talk loudly to their pals, whilst working, about their friend, the dear Duchess of this, or their uncle, the Vicomte of that, and so forth, for the benefit of all around. But this big talk didn't impress us much if we happened to hear it. The aristocracy inspired no awe in the mind of the average student; rather the contrary—it and the sale bourgeois, who were born rich and idle, excited disgust and contempt, which was often expressed in forcible terms.

There was a funny way of letting the "poseurs" know what was thought of their bombastic talk, when, for instance, one of them mentioned perhaps how he had been dining the evening previously with someone of title. Immediately the crowd working round would imitate in chorus the bugle call with which it is customary to receive a general when he rides on to parade. There would be a yell of laughter, and this usually stopped them bragging, for that day at any rate.

Then there were the English and the Ameri-

cans, mostly quiet, reserved, and well-dressed fellows, who kept themselves very much to themselves, seldom attempting to join in any "ragging," probably because their knowledge of French was as a rule very limited; in fact, it was this reserve which accounted for so few of them acquiring any proficiency in the language. I knew several men who had lived several years in Paris, yet could scarcely speak a word of French; they were always speaking English, and did not appear to care to associate with anyone outside their own set.

With the exception of the English and the Americans, the majority of the students at the École were as poor as church mice, and how they managed to live was always a mystery to me, yet they seemed happy enough. There was one chap in particular—he has made a name for himself since—who only had fifty francs a month. His parents were peasants, he told me, and it was only by pinching themselves that they were able to send him even this modest pittance. Still he managed to exist on it somehow, to his great credit, and was already doing good work. I remember he confided in me that he had contrived to make his own colours; otherwise he could not have afforded to buy them at the marchand de couleurs. Of course, most of the students were quite young—some scarcely more than lads—but there were several who were long past the conventional age of the étudiant of the Quartier; they had started



"THE TYPES OF STUDENTS VARIED CURIOUSLY."

too late, as a rule, and would always remain novices.

When work was over, or if, as not infrequently happened, after déjeuner, the weather was particularly warm, Stott and I would have a stroll, and perhaps make our way across the river to the Louvre, or else to the Champs Élysées, and watch the gay traffic, and discuss what we should do with all our wealth if ever we became famous, and rich in consequence. Ah! those dreams of youth!

And so the weeks passed, and on Sundays I always spent the day like a good boy—en famille. Not that there was anything in the nature of an irksome duty about it; very much to the contrary, in fact, and I quite looked forward to the week-ends at Auteuil, where I usually went, as the old people liked to have all the family round them on Sundays. There was always a lively gathering—endless badinage and laughing, and never a dull moment.

Déjeuner, in particular, was a great affair on Sundays, as friends would often drive out from Paris and arrive unexpectedly, so one never knew beforehand how many would sit down; but the house was so large that it did not really matter—the more the merrier.

Monsieur Thomas and I would often arrange some harmless practical joke on someone present, which was always laughable, because it was quite inoffensive, and even the pompous old butler had

difficulty at times in keeping his countenance. I remember one of these jokes particularly, as it ended rather curiously. There was a young fellow, a relative of the family, a student at the École de Droit. He was a particularly timid and retiring youth, and so nervous that he would blush and simper like a schoolgirl on the slightest provocation. One Sunday Monsieur Thomas and I got up a joke at his expense to see what he would do. We managed to procure some dummy cakes made of a sort of canvas, and very much like the real thing. I recollect they represented brioches with chocolate on them, and looked exactly like the sort which are sold with cream inside, and I arranged to put them in a dish separately. Everybody at table was in the secret, and when it came to handing round the sweets I persuaded him to try one of the dummy cakes. We all of us went on talking loudly and looking the other way so as not to burst out laughing; then after giving him time, as we thought, to find out the joke, we turned round to ask how he liked this particular kind of éclair. To our amazement we discovered he was eating it with gusto, apparently being too timid to make any remark.

Naturally, I felt a bit nervous as to what the result might be, but thought it better to say nothing in order not to frighten him; but he had evidently got a digestion like an ostrich for all the effect it had on him. He seemed rather to like it, in fact.

I was passing through the salle à manger after lunch when I happened to notice something lying on the floor under the table. To my surprise, I found it was the cake in question; our timid friend was not quite such a fool as we took him for.

Apart, however, from practical joking, there was always such an atmosphere of gaiety, and, if I can put it so, of youth, at the house in the Parc des Princes that it was almost impossible to pass a dull day there. The whole family all took the keenest interest in my work, and as soon as I arrived on Sunday or Saturday, as the case might be, I had to give them a full account of my doings during the week. As I was the first Art student they had had in their midst, my description of the life in the studio and the Quartier came, I imagine, as a sort of revelation to them all, to the ladies especially—though, of course, I had to somewhat veil my stories. They would have been a bit too hot for these simple bourgeois, who looked upon Paul de Kock and Henri Murger as mere romancers. What a splendid audience they made. Over lunch or dinner I was always a privileged raconteur, and if I happened to hit on something particularly interesting, their rapt attention well repaid me for having to eat my food cold, as often would happen, and then they would all have to wait. "Mais laissez le manger," someone would exclaim. "He'll finish the story afterwards."

But there were some very pretty women there

sometimes, and, young as I was then, I felt how delightful it was to be able to interest them even a little bit. Occasionally we would make up a theatre party on Saturdays and drive into Paris in the landau with the two big horses, and when we came back it was almost like returning to the country, so quiet was Auteuil in those days.

Talking of theatres reminds me of a somewhat curious incident that happened on one of these occasions. We had gone to the Théâtre des Italiens, which was then one of the most fashionable places in Paris. It has long since been pulled down. My friends always did things well—besides which, as they were very rich, they could afford to; so they generally had a box, and on this particular occasion we had the best loge in the house. There were four of us, one lady and three men. As there was plenty of room I happened to be sitting well in front, and in full view of the house. The curtain was not yet up when we entered, and we had not been seated many minutes before we noticed everyone looking in our direction. Glasses were levelled on us from all sides. We could see we were being talked about, and altogether there was no mistaking it, we had attracted attention, for some reason or other which we did not know. Still, the interest we had excited was evidently not of a disrespectful nature—rather the contrary; of that there was no doubt. We began to wonder what was the cause of it all,

when a discreet knock came at the door of the box and Monsieur Thomas went to see who it was. He was outside for a few seconds, and when he returned there was an amused smile on his face, which we all knew from experience meant he had something up his sleeve.

"Well, what is it?" we all asked.

"Keep perfectly calm and don't laugh, because we are being looked at," he replied with an assumed air of great dignity, "and I will tell you. It has got about that Julius is the Prince Imperial visiting Paris incognito, and I was asked if such is the case. We shall have to be very circumspect as there may be a demonstration when we leave."

I may here mention that I was supposed to bear some resemblance at that time to the ill-fated Prince.

"But what did you reply?" I naturally asked.

"I told them I was not at liberty to tell who you were—which is true, isn't it? you haven't given me permission. Anyhow, c'est assez amusant n'est ce pas?"

"Well, you'll have to be very deferential to me all the evening," said I, scenting a good joke, and they all agreed to follow it up. So when it was the entr'acte, and we went into the foyer, I got the two men to walk obsequiously on either side of me with their opera hats in their hands, whilst I remained covered. In the meantime the rumour had got round that I was the Prince, and the

people gathered round to such an extent that it became quite embarrassing, and I was at last glad to return to the box. At the conclusion of the performance we found quite a crowd waiting outside, and as I got into the carriage several hats were raised in respectful salutation. It was indeed an amusing experience. The following day one or two of the papers gave out that the Prince Imperial had been seen at the Théâtre des Italiens the previous evening, but that no political importance need be attached to his visit to Paris, as he desired to remain quite incognito.

All my souvenirs of those early days at Auteuil are delightful. Here is another which is well worth recounting, as it was quite as interesting in its way. A big fête was given at the Palace of Versailles, in honour of some royal personage if I remember rightly. Anyhow, it was intended to outshine any previous entertainment of its kind given since the war. The papers for days beforehand were full of descriptions of the wonderful decorations and the preparations for the illuminations of the gardens, for it was intended that on this occasion all the ancient glories of Versailles under Louis XIV. should be revived. The spectacle promised to be unique, so it may be imagined how eagerly the invitations were sought after, for everybody wanted to be present. To our great satisfaction Monsieur Thomas received one of the coveted cards.

Well, the Sunday before the fête we were at Auteuil as usual, and after lunch one of the ladies mentioned how much she would have liked to be able to see the illuminations on the great night. We all agreed that they would be a sight the like of which had never before been seen anywhere, if they were carried out as the papers described they would be.

Unfortunately, however, the public were not to be allowed to approach anywhere near the Palace, so there was no chance of anyone without a card of invitation getting through the cordon of police. Suddenly someone suggested a way by which a few of us at any rate could see the gardens, if the scheme was carried out successfully.

And this is what he proposed: That instead of Monsieur Thomas going in the carriage he should take the factory van, and we would stow ourselves in it somehow, and if we got through the lines we should have plenty of opportunity of seeing all that was going on. This, of course, was only the rough idea; how he proposed to carry it out I will describe.

Well, Monsieur Thomas, sportsman as he was, agreed to risk it; so it was arranged that the van should come early, so as to give us ample time to make our preparations. I may here explain that the covered-in vans used in France are known as "tapissières." They are very large vehicles, solidly built, and with a hood projecting over the

driver's seat. When they belong to a big private firm or a factory they seldom have any name on them, and therefore have a certain air of distinction. The tapissière from the Rue de Reuilly was quite well-appointed and clean. The importance of this having been the case will be seen, and the driver Antoine had been with the firm since he was a lad, and his father and grandfather before him, so he could be fully trusted to carry out any instructions without remark.

The eventful night arrived, and punctually to time the van perfectly empty and thoroughly clean inside and out. Everything had been well thought out and was in readiness. Four of us were to accompany Monsieur Thomas. A very pretty girl of eighteen a niece of his, Alexandre Thomas, another young fellow, and myself.

As I have explained, the van was a very large one, and there was plenty of space. We, therefore, put into it chairs, a fauteuil for the lady, a small table and a lamp, which made it look like a tiny sitting-room; but we knew it was likely we should be out all night, so it was necessary to arrange to be comfortable. Of course, the reason for the table had not been overlooked, and Madame Thomas had it well stocked with sandwiches, fruit, sweets and wine. We were going to make a delightful picnic of the adventure, and all were in the gayest spirits.

At last we were ready to start, and amidst much

laughter we all climbed into the vehicle, the door of which could be bolted from the inside. Monsieur Thomas looked positively magnificent in evening dress with his big fur coat, and very much out of place in the van, but that was part of the plot that he should, as will be seen. Well, off we started, and the two powerful horses made light of their easy load. It does not take long to cover the distance between Auteuil and Versailles as a rule, but on this eventful occasion we had no sooner got into the main road than we found ourselves in the midst of an endless stream of carriages of every possible description conveying guests to the Palace. We made but slow progress as we gradually approached our destination, and at last barely moved at a walking pace, so dense was the crowd of vehicles; but we took the delays in very good part. The lamp was extinguished, and we sat with the door at the back wide open, so had a fine view of all that was going on around, as, so far, our peculiar carriage had been allowed to proceed without hindrance—it might have been a van going anywhere in the direction of Versailles, and the road was only blocked after a certain point, which had been announced by the police. At last we knew we were within touch of the military cordon round the Palace, so the door was closed, and we sat in darkness, though we could see all that was going on through the front of the van. We could see the carriages ahead

of us pulled up whilst the occupants produced their tickets of invitation. The regulations were very stringent on this point.

Now the culminating point of our adventure was at hand, and it was necessary for Monsieur Thomas to enact his part in it. Seating himself in the front of the van next to Antoine, he waited events. We proceeded at a snail's pace. Suddenly an officer rode up and demanded furiously to know "what that tapissière was doing there." Then Monsieur, standing up, called out to him. The sight of this resplendent personage in evening dress and heavy fur coat on the humble van had the desired effect. The officer was evidently much surprised, and he came up alongside to investigate personally. Then Monsieur Thomas produced the gorgeous card of invitation to the Palace, and explained that his carriage had broken down on the road from Paris, and this "brav homme," indicating Antoine, who sat as stolid as a deaf mute, had kindly offered to give him a lift. Of course we could not be seen, as we were sitting in the darkness inside. The officer was much impressed, and congratulated Monsieur Thomas on his luck in arriving at all; and then turning to Antoine, added, "I will give you a pass so that you can get through and out again without difficulty," and handed him an official card.

This done, we then proceeded, and soon found ourselves in the midst of the splendour of the fête

It was like driving through fairyland, as our pretty companion expressed it, and really the effect was very beautiful. On all sides were illuminations, and in every possible place—in the trees, along the walks, round the fountains—statues everywhere; whilst the strains of music which could be faintly heard added to the weird and enchanting effect. It was indeed a sight to be remembered, and well worth the risk we had taken. We had no difficulty in driving right up to the entrance indicated in Monsieur Thomas's invitation card. We were stopped several times, but the official pass acted as an Open Sesame.

We arranged to go and wait with the van at a certain well-known café restaurant in Versailles, as we rightly anticipated there would be a tremendous rush for the carriages after the fête was over, and possibly much difficulty in meeting in the grounds of the Palace. Very slowly we made our way out after depositing Monsieur Thomas safely at the brilliantly lighted entrance, where was a big crowd of elegant ladies and men in every description of gorgeous uniform. Someone remarked irreverently that it looked like the commencement of a fancy-dress ball.

We reached the café and were not sorry to get out of the van, as we all felt very cramped after sitting in its somewhat narrow confines for so long. Still, we had had a wonderful experience, the memory of which would long remain. Now, how-

ever, commenced the tedium of waiting for the return of our friend, and I can still recollect vividly how slowly the time dragged on, and how sleepy we all got towards the small hours of the morning. The café we were in offered nothing very attractive at that time of night, and as we had already supped copiously in the van naught remained but to while away the time as best we could playing cards and drinking endless coffees.

At last, as we were all dozing off, Monsieur Thomas turned up, and, tired though we were, his appearance caused us the greatest merriment. I can still see him in my mind's eye. He was, as I have said, an exceptionally big man; so when I relate that he had on a hat much too small for his massive head, and was wearing an overcoat that had been made for a man about half his size, it may be imagined what he looked like. We positively shrieked with laughter as he walked in, but his usual good-humour had for once deserted him, and he did not appreciate our mirth, for we soon realised that he was in a towering rage. Then we learned that the cloak-room arrangements at the Palace had completely broken down; that the officials in charge had quite lost their heads; and that in the end there had been a wild scramble for coats and hats—and these miserable articles were all that he had been able to get in place of his "gibus" and his splendid fur-lined coat. No wonder he was angry—who would not have been?

And then he told us that, to make matters worse, one of the men at the vestiaire had been positively rude to him, and that when he had insisted that this wretched garment and silly hat were not what he had deposited on his arrival, he had actually replied " that he was sorry but he could not give him a fur-lined coat as he hadn't a single one left! "

It was only on talking the subject over some days after that the humour in the man's response occurred to us. Meanwhile the fur-lined coat and opera hat were never found, so it turned out a very expensive evening's amusement. This contretemps naturally spoiled what would otherwise have been a most interesting experience.

CHAPTER IV

I am passed for the atelier—My entrée—The Massier—Paying my footing—An impromptu picnic—"Ragging" the nouveau—A duel with paint-brushes—The corvée—A little unpleasantness—A studio procession in the Quartier—Models—The visits of the "Patron"—An amusing incident—Sympathy between the artist and his pupils—Gérome's kindly nature.

I HAD been in the antique about three months when I was passed for the atelier, and I well recollect with what feelings of elation I made my way upstairs. Stott did not get in till afterwards, but he looked on himself as a landscape painter, so was not particularly concerned about it—as figure painting with him would be but an accessary to his Art. The three studios of the professors of painting at the École were then situated in a spacious corridor on the first étage—Cabanel's was at the top of the staircase, then came Lehmann's, and lastly Gérome's.

It was about half-past eight in the morning when I somewhat timidly knocked at the big door—there was a terrific noise going on inside which perhaps accounted for my receiving no reply. I knocked again and again; still no reply, so I

turned the handle and boldly entered. From what I had been told I expected to see something out of the common, but the scene that confronted me quite took me aback. It was a very large studio lighted by an immense window on one side. Facing this was a platform on which a nude female model was posing; around the platform forty or fifty students, in blouses and every conceivable description of fantastic attire, were working in a big semi-circle—those nearest the model were seated on low stools making drawings, behind them were others painting seated at their easels, the next row were seated on stools somewhat higher, and the outside row was standing. The walls were covered with clever caricatures, and over all was a thick cloud of tobacco smoke.

As I entered, a lusty chorus was in full swing, and for a few seconds my presence was not noticed as I stood irresolute just inside the door; then suddenly someone spotted me and yelled out, in a voice that drowned the chorus, " Un nouveau." In an instant the singing ceased, and then arose the most deafening uproar I have ever heard—it was as though Bedlam had been let loose. Up they all jumped and fairly shrieked at me. For a few moments I could not make out what was said, but it was evidently not of an unfriendly nature, so I smiled and tried to look as pleasant as possible. Then someone approached me, and I explained that I was a nouveau, and he then with a low

mock obeisance begged to have the honour of presenting me to the Massier—so I followed him to where a big fellow with a long beard was seated at an easel. All the while the other students were crowding round, keeping up a deafening row, and making all sorts of remarks, mostly uncomplimentary, about my general appearance. I was gravely requested to give in full my name, age, nationality, place of birth, and other details of a more or less intimate character, which the Massier proceeded with great solemnity to enter in a book which he evidently kept for the purpose. This being done, he then put to me a question as to my willingness to comply with certain formalities in connection with my entry to the atelier; these consisted in the "masse"—otherwise in paying my footing, i.e. standing treat to the studio. For this I was quite prepared, as I had been told beforehand what would be expected of me—so I replied that nothing would give me greater pleasure, at which another terrific yell burst forth from the crowd.

"Sacré Anglais, c'est tres-bien cela," they cried. "What would you like to pay for?" I was then asked.

"Everything that is usual," I replied.

"Des saucissons, sardines, du fromage, du fruit, du pain, and du beurre—du vin, du cassis, des cigarettes and des cigars," was decided on; a rough calculation of how much would be required, and the two last nouveaux were deputed to go out with

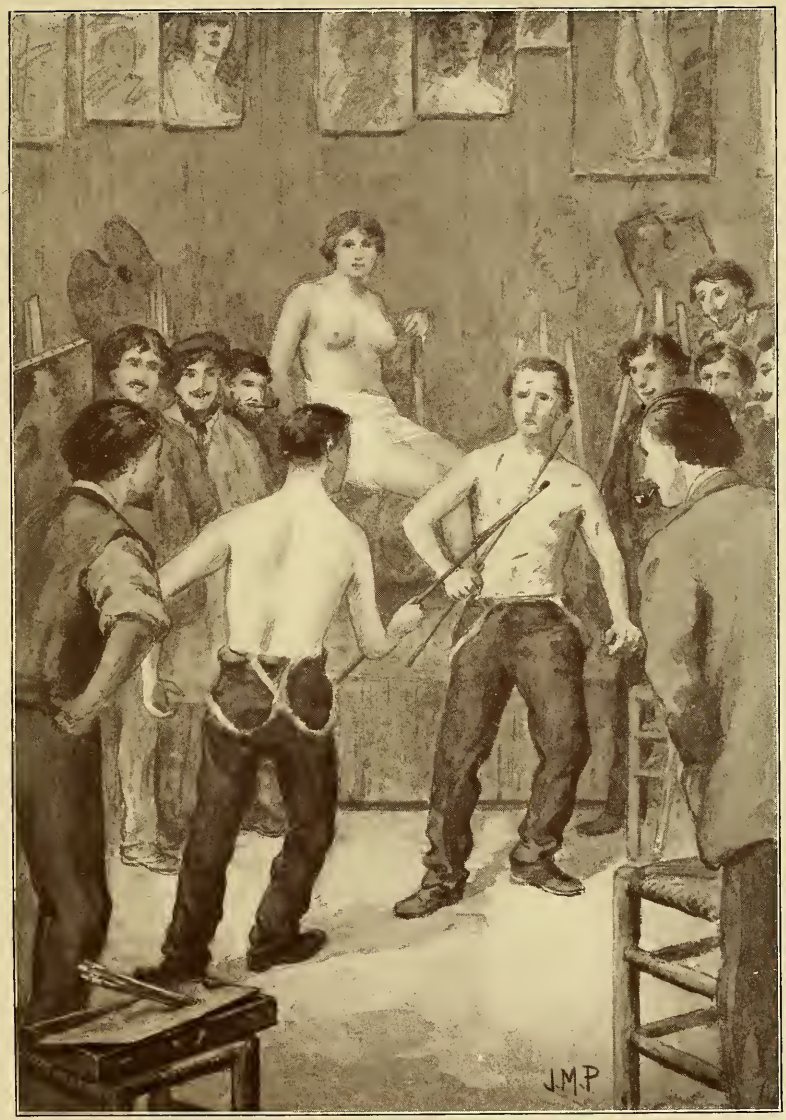
me to fetch all this in. So out we went together. I felt delighted—it was all so friendly, for I instinctively felt that this ragging was of the most good-natured character, and that it only depended on me for the result. Although the Massier had with a feeling of the utmost camaraderie suggested the amount of the various items to be brought in, they all seemed such jolly good fellows that I ventured to augment this considerably, and we returned to the atelier positively laden with provisions.

As may be imagined, the yells that greeted our return were quite different to those that had greeted my arrival. An impromptu picnic, to which the model (without troubling to put on any clothes) and I were also invited, then followed, after which work was about to be resumed, when there were cries for " a speech " from the nouveau ; then others called out for a song ; then the clamour increased till at last those in favour of a song had it—so I was told to give them something in English. I've got about as much voice as a rusty file, but there was no help for it. I had to do the best I could. I was about to start when there were cries of " On the stove " ; so on the stove I had to climb—fortunately it was not alight—then came " Off with your clothes." Without hesitating I laughed and made a movement as though to comply, and started undoing my braces although the model was posing alongside. Then someone exclaimed, " No —no—he's far too ugly for that ; it's bad enough

to have to look upon him with his clothes on.' Then someone else replied, " Yes—quite true—let him get along with his rotten song and then we can go on with our work." So perforce I gave them " Nancy Lee," and oh! the groans and hisses it evoked. I should not have been surprised had they started throwing things at me.

Well, they let me finish somehow, and then called out " Assez," and " Descendez," and " Tout de même il a bon caracture cet Englisch," and other complimentary remarks, after which I was left in peace and strolled round and chatted with some men I already knew. They congratulated me on getting off so easily, as it often happened, they told me, that the nouveau had a very rough time, especially if he showed signs of losing his temper. The great thing was to take all the ragging in good part and to try and realise that what was happening was what had happened to every-one in the atelier when he first joined. I have not a particularly easy temper, but I had evidently hit it off very well, as I was scarcely ever ragged or made fun of after this, and was not long making friends all round.

Every nouveau however, did not get off so easily as I did, and very often they had to go through some thrilling experiences. I remember on one occasion two came to the studio at the same time. It was a nasty morning and not much light for work, so the crowd was in a mischief-making mood,



"IN A VERY FEW MINUTES THEY WERE BOTH COVERED WITH COLOUR AND IN A HIDEOUS MESS."

which was aggravated by the two nouveaux being either too poor or mean to pay a decent bienvenue.

"They must fight a duel with paint-brushes," someone called out.

This was immediately agreed to, and the fellows, in spite of their protests, were made to strip to the waist; then two brushes were tied on to two mahl-sticks and dipped into Prussian blue and vermilion, and they were ordered to go for each other, which they did willy-nilly. In a very few minutes they were both covered with colour, and in a hideous mess. Considering the very slight accommodation for washing in the studio, it may be imagined the state they must have been in when they got home.

There were, however, certain duties or "corvées" of a more or less irksome nature which every nouveau had to do, whether he liked it or not; these were to "fag" for the anciens, such as fetching cigarettes or tobacco, see there was a supply of savonnoir for washing the brushes—and even to wash the brushes if asked to do so—and to take the towels to the washerwoman and bring back the clean ones every week. These corvées had to be done till there was a fresh "nouveau"—then he in his turn took them on. One might, therefore, have to do them for several months.

It did not take me long to get into the ways of the atelier—and in a very short time I felt quite at home in my new surroundings. The camaraderie

that existed was absolutely delightful, and I can only recall one instance of bad feeling or quarrelling the whole time I was there—and that curiously enough concerned me. It happened this way. An American student, who for some reason or other had always picked me out as the butt for any joke or any senseless remark he might think of, was working next to me one morning when he started his usual tactics, to the great amusement of the atelier. I took it good-humouredly as was my wont, as it takes a good deal to rouse me, till at last he got so personally offensive that I could stand it no longer; so putting down my palette I turned to him and said very quietly, as I hate a scene, "I have had enough of your blasted insinuations; come down into the courtyard and we will see who is the better man." I was white with rage, and he could see it.

He remained speechless for a second, and then said in a strained tone of voice, "I don't understand you, Price."

"Well, you come downstairs and you jolly soon will," I replied, looking him straight in the eyes.

To my surprise then, for he was a very big fellow, he burst into a husky sort of laugh and called out to the crowd in French, "Here's Price lost his temper because I have chaffed him, and he wants me to go out and fight him."

"Well, you've got to do that or apologise," I replied at the top of my voice.

"Well, put it right here," he said, offering me his hand, "I meant no offence, old man."

Of course this ended the incident and we were always good friends afterwards.

When I joined Gérome's there were many youngsters painting there who have made big names since—as, for instance, Dagnan-Bouveret, Buland, Bompard, Helleu, La Gandara, Harrison, Swan; whilst in the other studios were Solomon J. Solomon, La Thangue and Stanhope Forbes; but the great majority failed to realise their early promise, for one has not heard of them since. A talent d'atelier does not necessarily mean success later, and many after a short struggle gave up Art for commerce. It was a hard-working, enthusiastic crowd, full of animal spirits, and there was never a dull moment at any time—in fact the most pleasant hours of the day were those spent during the morning in the studio. Everyone was known by some nickname, some of these being very funny indeed. I got to be christened Vélocipède IV. from the fancied resemblance to the late Prince Imperial I have already mentioned.

Practical jokes were of everyday occurrence, and were often of a character which displayed well the inventive genius of their authors. I remember one in particular, which is well worth recounting. It was a dark, unpleasant sort of morning, when work was scarcely possible; we had been filling in the time with singing, boxing, wrestling, and what-

not, whilst hoping it would clear up and get light again. Suddenly someone suggested a procession through the Quartier; no sooner said than done—the tallest student dressed himself up as a bishop, and with a clean white blouse and paper mitre he looked quite the real thing. The rest of us got ourselves up as choristers—carrying lighted candles stuck in long paper rolls—priests, and other officials. There was even a church beadle in cocked hat. Then we started, down the stairs, through the courtyard, then round it, solemnly entoning an imitation chant; then out through the big gates into the street, to the immense amusement of the passers-by. With slow footsteps we went through the Passage des Beaux Arts into the Rue de Seine, then back by the Rue Jacob and the Rue Bonaparte. It may have been sacrilegious, but the Church was never held in much respect in the atelier, and certainly it was immensely funny as a skit. The most curious part of it, and what struck me most, I remember, was that the guardians of the École, and even the very sergents de ville, all smiled and entered into the joke; we were not interfered with in the least, although the traffic was held up while we passed.

There was a fresh model every week—always the nude, that goes without saying—male and female alternately—and the engaging and selection was generally left in the hands of the Massier, who was the recognised head of the atelier; but

the pose was decided on by the majority of the anciens when the model came on the Monday morning. The models presented themselves once a month or so—although on any Monday morning they could show themselves if they were not already known to the atelier; sometimes as many as a dozen would be waiting, and so as not to waste time, they would undress in the corner and come up in batches on to the platform—old, young, male and female, and all completely nude. One got quite accustomed to it. The scene was very curious, and at first put me in mind of a slave market; afterwards one got satiated, as it were, with the nude, and the more especially as the women were seldom of exceptionally prepossessing appearance. The men were mostly Italians, and of course all were professional models and well known in the various studios. If a girl wanted to become a model, and happened to be really pretty and had a good figure, there was no necessity for her to sit at the École—she could easily get all the work she wanted privately; but of this more anon.

Work commenced at an unusually early hour judging from the English standpoint—seven o'clock in the summer and eight in the winter. The séance lasted four hours, and there was a rest for the model of five minutes exactly in every hour.

There was scarcely ever a moment's silence all the time—songs, badinage, and wit without cessa-

tion, and hard work notwithstanding. There was no necessity to go out for anything in the shape of paints or materials, as old Chabot of the colour shop in the Rue Jacob used to come round of a morning with a case of brushes and colours, and would bring one in canvases or paper. The "Patron's" visits took place on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and as soon as he entered he would salute us smilingly with a "Bonjour, mes amis," to which we all replied, "Bonjour, Monsieur"; then there was dead silence whilst he made his way round the studio from pupil to pupil—sitting down in front of the canvases or drawings, and giving friendly and valuable advice. It was all so delightfully informal, yet withal so thoroughly in keeping with the traditions of the École, that a word of encouragement from the great artist put one on good terms with oneself for the rest of the day, and made one feel life was really worth living. After he had done his round of the studio, an easel would be placed near the wall, and everyone could submit sketches or other work done outside for his criticism. This was the most trying ordeal of all, as his remarks on these efforts, though always good-natured, were not accessarily of a complimentary nature—and often were received with roars of laughter by the crowd of students, at the expense of the unlucky recipient.

I remember one occasion particularly, because I happened to be the victim. I had painted, or to

"USED TO COME ROUND OF A MORNING WITH A CASE OF BRUSHES AND COLOURS."

be more correct had attempted to paint a small portrait in the open air of my neighbour in the Rue de Seine—if I remember rightly he was supposed to be a Hungarian nobleman—and he was so pleased with the result that he had it framed regardless of expense, and with his coat of arms on the top. I brought it to the studio to show Gérome and get his opinion on it, as it was my earliest effort of portraiture and I was rather proud of my achievement. It was in its gorgeous frame, which gave it an unduly pretentious appearance, for it was unusual to exhibit one's work in such a pompous style; besides which, the painting itself was hardly worth a frame of any description. It was duly placed on the easel. After looking at it attentively for a few seconds, Gérome remarked with a humorous twinkle in his eye, " J'aime assez le cadre " (I rather like the frame). That was all. The crowd was fairly convulsed with mirth, and I took it down from the easel with rather less assurance than I had placed it there, and feeling very small indeed.

Still it did no harm, this uncomplimentary criticism, as it took the conceit out of one a bit, and after all there was nothing unkind or unnecessarily cutting about it.

I always used to think that it must have been in similar fashion that the great masters of the Middle Ages were en rapport with their pupils, and it was doubtless this fraternal cordiality that in no small

degree helped to develop the genius of the old Italian and Dutch schools. It is the delightful touch of human nature, the bond of sympathy between the great artist and the humblest of his pupils, that makes the student life of Paris so attractive, and which apparently cannot exist in prosaic matter-of-fact England.

Gérome was far and away the most popular of all the professors of painting in Paris in those days, and had his atelier been double the size it would have still been overcrowded, so keen was the desire to be accepted as his élève. With those who were earnest, serious workers he was always a sympathetic and encouraging adviser, but gare aux flâneurs—for those he had no use. Beneath the somewhat gruff and uncompromising exterior was a kindly nature that made him be regarded with positive affection by his pupils. The following touching little story will convey some idea of the man as apart from the professor.

A young fellow had been accepted by him as an élève and was passing the usual period of probation in the antique when he showed such exceptional talent that Gérome told him to go up into the atelier forthwith. Shortly after, the maître was paying his weekly visit to the antique, when he found him still working there.

"I thought I told you to go upstairs and work from the life," he said rather sharply—for he liked his pupils to do what he told them to do.

J. L. GÉROME.

" Yes, Monsieur, I know you did, but——"

" Well, and why didn't you? "

The youth turned colour, looked very confused, then after hesitating a moment tears came into his eyes and he replied, " To tell you the truth, Monsieur—I did not expect to get out of the antique so soon, and my parents are only poor work-people, and they are doing the best they can for me, and I don't like to ask them for the money to pay my masse yet a while. I should not like to go up into the atelier and be different to the others, so I thought I would wait a little longer; and I hope you will forgive me, sir, for not doing what you told me," he added, and the tears were streaming down his face.

Gérome was silent for a few seconds, then in an altered voice he said kindly, and patting the boy on the shoulder, " Mon ami, why did you not tell me this? I expect my élèves to confide in me, since I am interested in their welfare." Then as he turned to go away he asked abruptly, " Where are you living? "

The boy gave his address, wondering what that had to do with it.

The following day a letter reached him; it contained a mandat de poste for one hundred francs, and a few lines from the maître telling him to start work at once in the atelier.

That youth became one of Gérome's most distinguished pupils and made a big name for himself.

CHAPTER V

Déjeuner in the Quartier—Thirions—Curious incident in the Rue du Four—Arlequins à 2 sous—A joke on the waiter—Copying at the Louvre—Julians—The atelier in the Rue d'Uzès.

We generally went to déjeuner as soon as the model had gone, for one felt pretty hungry by then, after getting up so early. There were lots of little restaurants in the neighbourhood which would be crowded at this hour. Every coterie had its favourite place of reunion—which was usually selected for some special reason, but generally from motives of economy, for we were not fastidious as to the quality of the food. Stott and I and several of the American and English students used to meet at a place in the Rue St Bénôit where it was quite good, considering how cheap everything was. Then there was Thirions in the Boulevard St Germain, a very quaint and old-fashioned little place, reputed to have been favoured by the presence of no less a personage than Thackeray when he was a student at the Beaux Arts. It had a certain renown in consequence, though I don't think the food was any the better for it.

I remember a curious incident that occurred at a small restaurant in the Rue du Four, where we used to feed sometimes. It conveys a good idea of the rough-and-ready manners of the Quartier. We were rather later than usual for lunch one day and there were only a few students in the place, as déjeuner was practically over by one o'clock. We were nearly finished when to our amazement the door opened and two men entered carrying a large coffin on their shoulders; with the utmost gravity they passed slowly through the room with their grim burden and made their way up the stairs leading to the " Salon pour Noces " on the first floor. The lugubriousness of the unwonted spectacle would have probably horrified older folk than ourselves, but to an étudiant, as to the proverbial Sappeur, nothing is sacred. After the first moment of stupefaction facetious remarks were heard —someone wanted to know if it was a client of the house who had died suddenly after dining there, to which another replied that it was not that at all, it was the cold meat for the assiette à l'Anglaise they were bringing from the charcutier's. The manager, who evidently felt that some explanation was due to the customers, came forward and told us that he regretted to inform us that the proprietress had died suddenly, and as there was no other entrance to the house but that leading through the restaurant, this painful scene could not be avoided. Evidently it did not occur to him that to have

closed the place for a couple of hours in the afternoon would have been the decent thing to do under the circumstances.

Many of the students went much farther afield, even to places as far away as the Boulevard d'Enfer —very eccentric most of them, though; there was one in particular where the knives and forks and spoons were chained to the tables, which was, however, only visited when one had got to the end of one's month's allowance and had been more extravagant than usual.

There was an old woman at the Marché St Germain who used to sell Arlequins à 2 sous. These consisted of odds and ends of the débris from the restaurants. These were laid out in rows of plates, and if you got there early you might be fortunate enough to get something tasty, such as half a fowl, or a nice piece of beef and carrots, but it was all a matter of luck what was on the plates, as the ingredients were mixed up anyhow. The old lady, though, wouldn't always let you have the plate you chose for the two sous. "A non, mon petit," I remember she would say, "je ne peux pas te ceder ça pour moins que 3 sous il y a du dindon dedans, mais tu auras une bonne croûte avec"; and if she was in an extra generous mood you got a large piece of bread, which hadn't been kicking about too much on the ground, thrown in. You then emptied the plate on to a newspaper you had brought with you, and ate the contents there and

then whilst strolling round the market, finishing up with a cigarette and a two sous cup of coffee at the marchand de vin close by. One had indeed to be young and have a healthy appetite to tackle this unsavoury bill of fare.

It was a curious fact that the early days of the month—when one's allowance had just arrived—were marked by a cheery optimism with regard to expenditure which gradually disappeared as the succeeding weeks wore on; but the spirit of joking was ever present, no matter how low one's funds—sometimes even at the expense of the waiters. One in particular, very silly, but always raising a laugh. Someone would ask when near the end of a meal, "What cheese have you, waiter?" to which of course came the reply enumerating the usual list.

"Is the camenbert good to-day, waiter?"

"Oh oui, Monsieur."

"Nice and ripe?"

"Oui, Monsieur, in fine condition."

"Very well then, give me a piece of gruyère."

If the garçon did not know us, the look on his face may be imagined.

In the afternoon after déjeuner and till it was time to go to the Cours Yvon I used to copy at the Louvre. Gérome always recommended this as a method of learning technique, so for some months I followed his advice assiduously and got to look on Rembrandt and Titiens as personal friends; but after a time the old masters got on

one's nerves, one felt so insignificant alongside them, and the atmosphere of the galleries was so depressing that I decided that work at a life class would be more cheerful. At that time there was only one studio where on paying a fee you could go and paint when you chose. This was Julians, and it had attained considerable celebrity. It was divided into two ateliers—one in the Rue Montmartre and the other in the Rue d'Uzès close by. In the Rue Montmartre lady students were admitted as pupils, and, if they chose, even when nude male models were posing; there were no prejudices or false modesty. It was all considered Art—with a big A. I shall never forget my impressions on going there for the first time one afternoon. The model, a big brawny individual in a state of nudity, was taking a rest, seated by the stove smoking a cigarette; around the studio were groups of students, male and female—some of the latter quite young girls, chatting and laughing unconcernedly. To me the scene was a surprising one, but to them it was only part of the day's work evidently.

In the Rue d'Uzès there were no women students, and the fees were considerably less, perhaps for that reason; so as most of my particular friends from the École went there, I joined also. It made a very pleasant change from the Louvre, where there was an impression of hard work; it was a casual go-as-you-please sort of place, where there

"THE LOUVRE, WHERE THERE WAS AN ATMOSPHERE OF HARD WORK."

was no Professor, but where you managed to do a lot of good studies without undue effort. Men would stroll in with their paint-box and a canvas, and if they thought the model worth painting they would stay—if not, they'd have a chat and smoke and go away. It was probably this casual state of affairs that induced a number of very clever men to come and work at the Rue d'Uzès in the afternoon. There was of course no ragging or paying one's footing as at the École, but there was the same spirit of camaraderie—though perhaps in a somewhat modified degree, as the majority of the men were considerably older than those at the École, and there was therefore a tendency to divide up into cliques. Perhaps on account of the inartistic character of the neighbourhood—the Rue Montmartre is a wholesale business centre—the atelier lost a good deal of its Bohemianism—as, for instance, if one felt like going out for a cup of coffee there was only one place conveniently near, and that was the Brasserie Muller on the Boulevard Poissonière, which had a back entrance opposite the studio, but it was very bourgeois and not in the least like the cafés in the Quartier.

CHAPTER VI

The Quartier at night—The Boulevard St Michel—Petites ouvrières—A good joke and its dénouement—Practical joking in the streets—The woman on the roof—Searching for a louis—The cafés in the Quartier—Bullier—A conjuring trick—Joke on the cocher—Fun at the waxwork show.

It must not be inferred, however, that it was all work and no play with us, for we managed to put in a good time now and then of an evening after work, in spite of a strictly limited exchequer—though this of course was more likely to happen at the beginning of the month, for the reason already mentioned. Still it really didn't require to have such a very well-lined pocket to find amusement in the Quartier at night. First and foremost there was the Boulevard St Michel, that happy hunting-ground where one was pretty sure, if it was fine, to come across some pals from the atelier, or perhaps pick up some pretty girl who'd come and have coffee with you in one of the many places around. The petites ouvrières in those days were neither difficiles or extravangantes—the type is a bit altered since, from all accounts. There was rather a good joke which often served

to while away an evening—it had at any rate the merit of originality. Supposing, for instance, after dinner we were three or four together and nothing particular to do, we'd separate at the corner of one of the big thoroughfares—the Rue des Écoles or Boulevard St Germain, for instance—and each one take a different direction, and agree to meet later, say in an hour's time, at some café we knew; but the conditions were that whoever turned up without a girl had to stand drinks all round; and to make it more amusing, it was understood that an old acquaintance should not count. It may be guessed how funny it often was when we all met, as arranged, and how sometimes there were some curious developments, as there was generally not much difficulty in finding a girl in the Latin Quarter.

These adventures, however, were not always unattended with risk, for there were many rough characters about, and I believe that it was the knowledge of this that made them the more attractive. I remember one occasion, however, which might easily have had an extremely unpleasant ending, so far as I was concerned. Several of us had dined together and had separated on one of these expeditions. I had chosen the Rue des Écoles as my hunting-ground, and had not been alone many minutes before I saw an exceedingly smart young woman get out of the tramway and come towards me; she was as good-looking as she

was well-dressed. "By Jove," I said to myself, "if I can only walk into the café with that, the boys will be a bit astonished." She passed but took no more notice of me than if I had been part of the pavement. However, I was not so easily put off; I determined to follow it up—so right along the Rue des Écoles we went. At length she turned up a quiet side street. "Now is my chance," thought I, so dashing after her I caught her up and, raising my hat, said very politely, "I believe I have the pleasure of knowing you, Madame."

She half turned round and, looking at me steadily, said in the coldest of tones, "That then is the reason you have been following me all this time, Monsieur; please do me the pleasure then to accompany me to the corner of the street and I will introduce you to my husband who, I see, is waiting for me there."

I felt I had made a mistake indeed, and that the best thing to do was to beat a retreat with as much dignity as possible, so again raising my hat I said in my best French, "I perceive, Madame, I am in error—please accept my apologies," and with that turned on my heels and walked away.

After this, as may be imagined, I felt in no mood for further adventure that evening, so made my way back to the café where we had all arranged to meet, and gradually my friends turned up, and all had found a companion. I explained as the

reason for my being alone that I had had no luck, which was literally true.

Now for the dénouement, which was almost dramatic. There was only one of us who had not yet put in an appearance, and we were beginning to wonder what had become of him, for it was getting late, when the door of the café opened and in he walked, accompanied by the very girl I had followed along the Rue des Écoles. I shall never forget her look of astonishment when she espied me seated at the table her newly found friend was bringing her to, but she gave no other sign of recognition. We were all introduced to the various ladies, as was customary on such occasions, though of course we never let the little dears know that their being with us was the result of a wager—and I fancied I detected a satirical smile on her face when it came to our turn to be presented to each other. I need scarcely add that I kept this adventure to myself, and I don't think she told our friend about it. Curiously enough, they were together for quite a long while after that; and I often wondered if their meeting that evening had really been purely accidental, or if he was the "husband" she had the appointment with.

There was endless joking in the streets at all times, day and night, and some of these very laughable. As, for instance, one which was known as the pas militaire. Four or five of us would perhaps be walking along some back street late at

night when we'd notice some individual walking ahead with a swaggering sort of step, as often happens. We'd immediately start whistling a march and all get into Indian file, gradually closing up behind him. Of course his first idea would be to change his pace, so as not to appear to be one of us, but as soon as he did, then we altered the time of the march so that he was obliged to keep in step with us. If he crossed the street, as he probably would, we would do likewise, still keeping up the tune; so at last he found himself marching, whether he liked it or not, at the head of a procession. This would continue till he reached the main thoroughfare again, when we would leave him with a cheer. Only once I recollect a man losing his temper, but when he was asked "Que voulez vous, Monsieur—on n'est donc pas libre de marcher comme l'on veut?" he thought better of it—besides, there were six of us.

One afternoon I and a friend were standing talking at the corner of the Rue du Dragon when we were joined by an awfully amusing little chap, who was always the life of our party; he stood talking to us for a few minutes about nothing in particular, without a suggestion of a joke, when all of a sudden he called out, "Mon Dieu, look up there," pointing to the roof of a house opposite. We looked, but there was nothing unusual to be seen; but his gesture and exclamation had been noticed by a passer-by and he stopped to look up.

This was all he wanted. "Mon Dieu, mon Dieu," almost shrieked our funny man, working himself up into a state of much excitement, "she'll fall off the roof—look there she goes behind those chimneys; something must be done to save her—look—she nearly slipped that time—oh! I can't stand here and look at it—it's too awful," and so on, and began to wring his hands and moan.

By this time a crowd had begun to collect, and everyone was gazing up; people opened their windows and looked out, wondering what all the excitement was about. My friend and I stood by, keeping our countenances with difficulty; it wouldn't have done to give the joke away—besides the funny man might have got hurt. Casual people in the streets don't like being made fools of. In a few minutes the thoroughfare was congested, and the traffic blocked. I asked someone who was standing near in the crowd if he could tell me what was the matter; without hesitation he told me that a man who lived on the fourth floor of the house was trying to murder his maîtresse, and that she had escaped from him on to the roof, and that the police had just gone to fetch the firemen and a ladder to get her down.

That was enough; I passed the hint to my friends and we discreetly came away. This same little chap had quite a gift of getting crowds to assemble, and all his ideas were equally funny.

Here's another joke that he played one evening.

We were passing through a quiet street leading on to the Boulevard, when all of a sudden, just as someone came along, he lit a match and commenced searching for something on the pavement; the passer-by stopped casually and in an aimless way started looking also, without even asking what was lost. Some rough-looking men came along and joined in the search; matches were lit and a regular hunt commenced. Someone even produced a bit of candle. Everybody was looking on the off-chance of finding something, which they probably did not intend to give up if they found. I can still see the curious effect of all these people groping about on the pavement and in the gutter with lighted matches. Suddenly it occurred to someone to ask our friend what he was looking for.

"A louis," he said.

"Are you sure you lost it just here?"

"Oh, I haven't lost one here," he replied casually.

"What! not lost one; then what are you doing with a lighted match?"

"I'm looking for one."

"Well, I'll be d——d," said the man, as it dawned on him it was a joke.

We did not as a rule wait to see the effect of the jest on the rest of the crowd. The bon bourgeois of the Quartier were, however, so accustomed to the escapades of the students, that scarcely any notice was taken of even the most uproarious wit;

though I must add that there was seldom any real harm in it, and if any damage was done they'd pay up like gentlemen—as indeed most of the students were. There was a noticeable absence of drinking strong liquors; coffee or light beer were the extent of one's libations, and I don't recollect seeing a drunken étudiant the whole time I was in the Quartier—whilst as to a drunken woman, I never saw one the whole time I was in Paris. All the fun and practical joking were the outcome of the exuberance of youth only, and the police knew it and treated it accordingly.

As may be imagined, the life in the Quartier was very divided up, and according to one's means one chose one's café de preference, where one would meet one's pals of an evening; the Soufflet, La Source, Vachette, and the Panthéon all had their own special clientèle, but they were too expensive and swagger for the average étudiant of the Beaux Arts, who used to patronise the little cafés round the Rue de Buci and Rue de Seine, where, over bocks or mazagrans, heated, though good-humoured discussions on Art would take place. There was, of course, dancing at Bullier on certain nights, but it was a bit too far off to go to often—and besides I always used to think it was a lot overrated, and the crowd there very mixed. The idea of calling it a "bal d'étudiants" was to my mind somewhat a misnomer, judging from the class of youths one saw there as a rule,

who had no claim whatever to be called students—whilst as to the "girls" who went there alone, they were nothing, more or less, than a lot of common women. It all resolved itself into a question of money—"Combien me donneras-tu?" Chance of any real adventure there was very remote, as one soon discovered; still Bullier was the only place of its sort on that side of the river, so it was always pretty full on Saturday and Sunday nights, and there was plenty of music and life, and if one went en bande it was often quite amusing. I remember a very funny incident occurring one night as a lot of us were going there.

We were in high spirits, and larking and fooling as usual when out for a spree. We all got into an omnibus to get there quicker. On the way one of our number, who rather fancied himself as an amateur conjurer, began palming coins and doing other feats of legerdemain, to the great astonishment of the passengers; then suddenly stooping down he pretended to pick up a five-franc piece from the floor, at the feet of a testy-looking old gentleman seated opposite, and showed it to us all as though he had been lucky enough to find it. Of course we knew the trick, but still we all laughed. Not so the old gentleman—he called the conductor and said something to him, which made him come to our friend and say that all property found on the omnibus must be handed

"IT WAS OFTEN QUITE AMUSING."

over to him, as he had to take it to the office; he would therefore ask him to be good enough to give him the five-franc piece which he had just picked up. The look on our friend's face can be imagined, as he was not over-blessed with five-franc pieces. In vain did he protest it was only a conjuring trick; the conductor was adamant—that could be explained by him at the office to the Secretary, who could believe him or not as he chose; his, the conductor's duty was plain. So there was no help for it—and so as not to create a scene we all advised our friend to hand it over and claim it later on, which he did. It took him six months I believe to get it back, less 1.50 for expenses. He gave up conjuring tricks after that.

But of practical joking there was no end. There was one pleasantry of a particularly idiotic nature which was always successful. When several of us were together at night we would sometimes hail a passing cab, and one of us would get in and immediately slip out by the opposite door, whilst the others would engage the attention of the cocher. There would ensue an earnest colloquy with the man who was apparently in the cab—ending up perhaps with an earnest recommendation to take great care of himself, not to eat too much tripe, obey his parents, write to us as often as possible, and so on, after which we would absolutely insist on paying his fare for him—the

very least we could do for such an old friend. Then with strong exhortations to the driver to go slowly and carefully, as his fare was very delicate, off would go the cab to some destination one thought of at the moment—generally a distant railway station, so as not to run the risk of meeting the cocher again. The idea of the effect on the driver when he discovered his passenger was missing was in itself sufficient to compensate us for the slight outlay the joke necessitated.

On one occasion four of us went to visit a big waxwork exhibition which had just been opened on the Boulevard. It was a most artistically arranged place—the disposition of the figures being particularly life-like. In one of the galleries on a slightly raised platform with a red rope encircling it was a group representing some famous musicians standing round a grand piano at which Liszt was seated playing one of his compositions. It was very realistic and all the poses most natural —it had evidently been done by a very talented artist. Close by the piano was a chair from which one of the figures was supposed to have arisen to lean over the piano. Our funny man immediately saw his chance of a joke. With a glance round to make sure no one was looking, he slipped under the rope and seated himself in the vacant chair, in a pose which harmonised capitally with the mise en scène. Although we were always prepared for anything humorous he might do, this audacity

fairly took us aback for a moment, and we had hastily to move aside so as not to be convulsed with laughter and give the joke away. Fortunately no one was near at the moment, not even an attendant. Our friend sat as rigid as a lay figure, hat in hand, head slightly bowed down in an attitude of deep respect, as became a person listening to a maestro playing one of his own chefs-d'œures. He happened to be dressed in a black suit of artistic cut, so somehow did not appear out of place in his surroundings. Presently a party of men and women came along and stood admiring the group—the ladies were particularly impressed at its realism—our friend coming in for especial praise, and receiving a lot of complimentary remarks—for I forgot to mention he was an exceptionally good-looking young fellow. At last one of the ladies said she never could have believed it was possible to copy anything so accurately in wax—it was positively life itself.

"I wonder what it feels like," she said, and slipping forward she furtively touched our friend's hand. This was too much for his equanimity, and he burst out into a loud laugh. The woman gave a shriek of fright, and she and her companions drew back so hurriedly that they knocked over a settee behind them—whilst our friend quickly descended from the platform. In a few seconds, however, with the delightful good-humour of the French nation, as soon as they realised the joke

they all joined so heartily in our laughter that an attendant came along to ascertain what all the hilarity was about; it had not struck him before that there was anything particularly humorous in the group of great composers.

CHAPTER VII

My first love affair—Rose—Excursion to Meudon—Robinson—Fontenay aux Roses—A friture at Suresnes—La Grenouillère—Amusing incident in a restaurant—Practical joke in a studio—I leave for London—Farewell dinner with Rose—A last letter—End of my first love affair.

It was about this time that there came to pass something which had a considerable influence on my life for the next few months, and as a faithful chronicler of those Bohemian days I must confess that what I am about to narrate was my first love affair. Up till then the little "aventures" I had had in common with all other students were not sufficiently serious to be worthy of being recorded. This one, however, was of quite a different character, as will be seen.

It came about this wise. Stott and I had broken out in a new place; in other words we had wandered afield and had struck a new restaurant for dinner, near the Boulevard St Michel, which was a bit away from our usual quarter.

I was feeding there one evening when a very good-looking girl came in by herself. This in itself had rien d'extraordinaire; but she appealed

to me at once, for she seemed quite a cut above the usual run of girls who came to cafés and restaurants unaccompanied, and I remember the thought struck me what a pity it was that she should have to go to a restaurant like this alone. But she seemed perfectly self-possessed, and evidently was an old habituée of the place, as the patron and waiters knew her. She took the only seat vacant, which, fortunately for me, was at the table adjoining mine.

In the crowded restaurants of the Quartier, where everyone at meal times was seated in such close proximity that one could scarcely move, there was no difficulty in getting on speaking terms with your neighbours; so a lady coming in alone could not object to being spoken to casually—cela n'engageait à rien. An opportunity soon presented itself for me to make a few remarks, and before she had got on far with her dinner we were chatting away as though we had known each other some time. I was not long in discovering that she really was very different to what one would have expected to meet in so simple a place, as she was a première in a magasin de modes in the Rue des Écoles, which accounted for her chic appearance; and then as we got more and more friendly in the free-and-easy manner of the Quartier, she confided to me that the reason she came there by herself to dine was because she felt very lonely and unhappy, as a great friend of hers had gone

ROSE.

to South America and wasn't coming back again. Then, of course, I told her that I also felt very lonely, and that I only wished I could be lucky enough to have an amie as pretty and nice as she was, and nothing would induce me to leave her to go to South America.

It will be seen from this that we were getting on rapidly—and the amusing part of it was that it all developed in the most matter-of-fact, casual sort of way; but in these adventures the unexpected is indeed always the most delightful. When she left we had arranged to meet again the following evening, and this chance meeting gradually led to our seeing each other frequently—then from frequently to every evening, and—till at last, as may have been expected, the inevitable happened, and one day Rose and I were more than ordinary amis.

The weather was particularly delightful in the May of that year, and I felt sorely tempted to leave the studio and take my paint-box and get away from the stuffy Quartier to the sylvan retreats of Meudon or Robinson. Amongst the many fascinations of student life in Paris these impromptu excursions are the most delightful; they have been described by poets and novelists from time immemorial—but you've got to be young and have a pretty girl hanging on your arm, as well as a keen sense of the romantic, to thoroughly enjoy them. Then you don't notice the toughness

of the bifteck, the sourness of the vin ordinaire, or the coarseness of the tablecloth—all is Elysium when she says it is the loveliest time she has ever spent in her life, and you are the only boy she has ever really loved (and one believes it); then the food is excellent, and the wine nectar, and the linen is the finest damask, and, well, it's the old, old story over and over again. So Rose got a day off and we went one lovely hot morning to Robinson, and spent the happiest day imaginable, and I made a sketch of her in the woods, and we rode on donkeys and déjeunéd and dined and spooned in the quaint little arbours built up in the trees; and we got back to Paris late in the evening, tired out but feeling, so we told each other, that we had had the time of our lives—and I was more in love with her than ever. Those were indeed days to be remembered.

On other occasions we explored Fontenay aux Roses, or Meudon—sometimes also Suresnes, where we knew a place where we could get a good friture avec un excellent petit piccolo. Then sometimes on Sunday, when I could find an excuse to get out of spending the day en famille, we would go to Bougival, where there was mixed bathing in a place called La Grenouillère, and screaming fun to watch. It was all very delightful.

Many of these little country "restaurants" were of a very primitive character—which added not a little to their charm in our eyes. I remember one

"AND I WAS MORE IN LOVE WITH HER THAN EVER."

in particular which we had taken quite a liking to, as the patron and his wife always went out of their way to give us a hearty welcome, and what was more to the point, generally something extra special for lunch or dinner, as the case might be. This led to a somewhat amusing little incident on one occasion. We were lunching there and as a hors-d'œuvre there was a dish of fine shrimps of the variety known as crevettes roses de Dieppe. We were busily engaged peeling and eating them when the patronne came along and was chatting with us, as was her wont, when she made the remark in her motherly way that we didn't understand taking the shells off the shrimps. "I will show you how we do it where I come from," she added, and suiting the action to her words, she picked up one and deftly removed the shell by some peculiar twist of her finger-nails. It was certainly very smartly done and seemed very simple, but try as we would we couldn't accomplish it ourselves; so she good-naturedly offered to do the rest for us. In vain we protested, for her hands and nails were begrimed with housework. Of course she didn't understand the reason for our scruples. I still remember the look on Rose's face, but not liking to offend her, as she was doing it out of pure kindness, we had to accept her proffered assistance, and we ate the lot. I never see shrimps even now without thinking of the incident.

During the whole time Rose and I were camarades I don't think we had a wry word—of course the fact of her being employed during the day was a great factor, as I had noticed that nearly all the tiffs between the étudiants and their amies arose from their seeing too much of each other. Rose was always known amongst my student friends as l'amie de Price, and wherever I went she of course accompanied me; and this reminds me of a funny joke we once had at her expense, and into the spirit of which she entered as heartily as all of us. We were invited to lunch one Sunday at a friend's studio—for his fête or something. There were six of us, three men and three demoiselles. It was, of course, very Bohemian, and we all helped to get in and to prepare the lunch. Rose was as busy as any of them, as she was a real little housewife and loved it. When all was ready and we were about to sit down to table I went into the cabinet de toilette to wash my hands, when I noticed she had left her rings on the washstand. An idea immediately struck me, and calling for my friend, our host, I asked him to make some excuse to get Rose to leave the table for a moment and go into the kitchen; then I quickly went to where she had been sitting, and taking out some of the crumbs of the piece of bread by her plate I put the rings inside and replaced the crumbs, so that the bread did not look as if it had been touched. Well, we were all seated and about to

commence when suddenly she jumped up, looking as white as a ghost, exclaiming, " Mon Dieu, I've lost my rings."

We all asked where she could have left them; it couldn't be in the studio. However, we all pretended to look for them—in the kitchen, the bedroom, everywhere. There was no help for it, we said, but to go on with lunch and trust to her having left them at home; but she was not to be reassured so easily, and for some minutes I thought she would burst out crying, in which case I should have had to tell her of the trick. However, she gradually calmed down and we proceeded with the hors-d'œuvre—while we all waited to see what would happen. At last she took up the piece of bread and broke it in halves. The cry of astonishment and the look of childish amazement on her face when she saw her rings buried in the crumbs was the funniest thing I think I've ever seen. I don't remember a more successful practical joke, nor one more appreciated. The studio fairly echoed with the shrieks of laughter that followed, whilst she came round to me and put her arm round my neck and kissed me, whilst she whispered " Méchant blagueur vas."

And so that summer gradually passed by, and in the atelier they began to talk about leaving Paris for the vacances, and of la peinture en plein air, and there was a restless roving spirit over us all, for the weather was perfect, and it almost

seemed a sin to coop oneself up in the atelier when one might be out in the open, painting from nature. Stott and I had sketched all there was to sketch round Bas Meudon and the neighbourhood, and began to talk about Brittany and the sea, when I received a letter from my guardian which necessitated my going over to London at once. There was no help for it; someone had forged a cheque on our little estate. The thief had been caught and I must go over and give evidence. It would mean being away some little time. Rose was very upset at the idea of my leaving, as we had never been apart for six months now, and had looked forward to our spending part of the vacances together—but she was too intelligent to show any annoyance.

" Puis qu'il faut que tu y ailles il n'y a rien à dire," she said in a broken voice.

The night before I left we had a little farewell dinner all alone, with a bottle of vin superieur, and I felt a lump in my throat the whole time, I remember; perhaps it was an intuitive feeling that this was to be our last meal together. But I did my best to be cheerful, and talked about all we would do when I came back; and the tears ran down her cheeks, and then I broke down also—so it was not a very lively repast.

I went away early next morning, and Rose came to the station to see me off. I was away longer

than I expected to be. We corresponded regularly for some time, and she told me all she was doing and how much she missed me; and then there was a stop. No letter for more than a week. I did not know what to think—so at last I sent a telegram—"Why no letter, very anxious." Then at last came news—"Écrivant aujourd'hui," so I had to bear my soul in patience till her letter arrived. I rushed to my room to read it quietly. To my astonishment it informed me that something très imprévue had happened: her old friend who had left her to go to South America had written from the Argentine to ask her to come out and marry him—that he had a lovely home to offer her, and had enclosed a banker's draft to pay her trousseau and expenses out, and that he expected a cable from her to say when she would start. "What could she do but accept?" she asked me. She had been thinking it over and had come to the conclusion, and her mother agreed with her, that it was the best thing that could happen to her, since she knew I did not want to get married; so she was leaving that day by the paquebot from Bordeaux for Buenos Ayres. "Tu reviendras à Paris," she ended her letter, "et tu te remettras à travailler ferme et tu penseras peut-être quelquefois à ta petite amie Rose qui t'a bien aimé. Adieu."

She gave no address to which I could write.

So that was the end of my first love story, and curiously enough also of the only liaison I had the whole time I lived in Paris. I had many petites amours after that, but I never came across another girl like Rose.

CHAPTER VIII

I return to Paris—Looking for new quarters—The Rue de la Rochefoucauld—Buying furniture—The Baronne d'Ange—First night in my new room—Curious incident—The restaurant in the Rue Vivienne—Eugénie—A rendezvous—A disappointment—My first sale of a picture—The petit rentier—I am commissioned to paint a portrait—A worrying sitter.

PARIS seemed very cheerless and I felt very lonely on my return. I had decided to give up my room in the Rue de Seine; so put up for a day or two at the Hôtel d'Isly in the Rue Jacob. But the Quartier had no longer an attraction for me, for do what I would the recollection of Rose and the delightful times we had spent there kept haunting me; so I decided to find a room up Montmartre way, where several friends had studios.

After the usual worrying search, this time without the assistance of my friend, Monsieur Thomas, I settled on a small, unfurnished chambre de garçon and cabinet de toilette in the Rue de la Rochefoucauld. It was a bit far from the École, but the walk of a morning would do me no harm, and it was not far from Julians when I left off of an afternoon, as I had decided not to continue the

Cours Yvon. The rent was only three hundred francs a year, and five francs a month for the concierge to do my ménage, so it could not be considered excessive; but I had to buy furniture, and that was a bit of a drawback. Still, I felt that sooner or later I should have to do this, as it was too extravagant living in a maison meublée, so I started buying the bare necessaries of a bachelor's room—a bed, table, two chairs, une armoire à glace, and a washstand. I could not well do with less. Then there were the unavoidable little extras—a bit of carpet, la vaisselle, curtains, sheets, towels, and an ornament or two; so by the time I had bought all these I had expended the modest sum my guardian had advanced me towards my putting myself dans mes meubles, and I recollect that it was with a certain amount of excusable pride that I arranged my little home, for it was the first time I had had anything in the shape of furniture of my own—so me voilà établi.

My humble apartment was on the third floor of an old house at the angle of the Rue de la Rochefoucauld and the Rue Pigalle, which I believe had formerly been the residence of Victor Hugo; when I went to live there it was chiefly famous as the residence of the Baronne d'Ange, a well-known cocotte of that time, who kept an establishment in the Rue St Georges. She occupied a spacious pavilion at the back of my house, and it was from here she used to drive to the Bois during the

season in a showy calèche, with a pair of horses respendent with silver trappings—and with a black groom seated alongside her. This gave No. 66 a certain cachet in the neighbourhood. The house was particularly well kept, and, being an old mansion, was quite out of the common—so it was rather fortunate to get a room there.

I remember, though, I had rather a shock the first night I slept there. It came about like this. My room with three others was on the landing at the top of the house. There was nothing whatever to indicate any communication between the rooms—otherwise I should not have taken it, as I have a horror of communicating doors such as one finds in all hotels on the Continent. To me there is nothing more unpleasant than the absence of privacy such doors convey, however much they may be hidden by furniture or curtains. My room appeared to have just ordinary walls, so I was satisfied. I went to bed with a feeling of satisfaction of being in my own sheets, and had fallen asleep when I was awakened by the curious feeling of someone being in my room. I sat up in bed and listened, when, to my intense annoyance and disgust, I discovered that the wall alongside my bed was not solid, although it had every appearance of being so, but was a door covered skilfully with canvas and paper. My neighbour's bed was only separated from mine by the very thinnest of partitions.

The voices which had woke me up proceeded from his room, and he was not alone—a female voice betrayed the fact; that they were not a married couple was also evident from their conversation. At first it was somewhat interesting and amusing to listen to the exchange of confidences which followed on what had evidently been but a rencontre du hasard, and the subsequent ébats d'amour, but when this continued till the small hours of the morning, to the detriment of my night's rest, I began to feel seriously upset—not merely because I had to get up early, but by reason of knowing that unless I could contrive something to stop it there would be no privacy for me either at any time.

The question was, what to do for the moment. To knock at the wall and call out "Assez" would never do. I should have only been inviting unpleasantness—as he was chez lui, and therefore at liberty to do as he pleased; so I decided to grin and bear it, and think out a solution the following day.

"C'est un peu désagréable j'en conviens mais l'on finit par s y habituer," said the concierge with a grin when I complained about it next day; however, she sent her husband up to see what could be done, and we found that by shifting my bed and putting the wardrobe in its place the sound was deadened to a certain extent, but all the time I lived there I had an unpleasant feeling that my

neighbour knew as much of my petites fredaines as I did of his.

My visit to England had but increased my enthusiasm for my work and my life in Paris. The very air of France seemed to have an effect akin to champagne on my temperament—an impression the years have never effaced. I returned, therefore, to my studies with a renewed energy, and every morning saw me marching down the Rue Notre Dame de Lorette at half-past seven, for it now being in the autumn, the atelier started an hour later than in the summer; and after déjeuner I would go on to Julians and paint there all the afternoon. And mentioning déjeuner recalls to mind a little incident that was rather amusing in its way.

There was a little restaurant close to the Palais Royal in the Rue Vivienne on the way to Julians —which someone had discovered, and where several of us used to go to lunch of a day. It was of course an inexpensive place, otherwise we shouldn't have gone there, cela va sans dire; still it had some sort of outward pretension. I remember they used to have all sorts of quaint things hanging at the door occasionally, such as a chamois, a deer, or mayhap a wild boar, such delicacies as one would expect to find in a first-class restaurant. This outside sort of larder gave a certain cachet to the place which had attracted us, although one soon found out that these

delicacies were never on the menu; they were probably only hired, and placed outside to attract customers.

Another attraction, however, that really existed, as we were not long in discovering, was an extremely pretty waitress. I can still picture her in my mind. She was dressed in a dainty sort of costume, with cap not unlike that of a London waitress, but worn with that chic which is the attribute of the Parisienne. She had light-coloured wavy hair, blue eyes, and lovely teeth, which she never missed an opportunity of showing; altogether, in the opinion of our crowd, she was "simply stunning," and her name was Eugénie. That we annexed her table permanently for lunch soon followed, as was only to be expected.

We were always a very merry party, all young artists, and probably a contrast in her mind to the usual of the restaurant—which mainly consisted of shop assistants from the neighbourhood. Well, it was not long before a sort of tacit and friendly rivalry sprung up between us. Each of us laid himself out, as it were, to outshine the other—the result being that the lunches developed into a constant interchange of wit and repartee, and all for the benefit of Eugénie (Nini, for short), who was evidently much amused thereat. Of course it goes without saying that there was but one idea underlying all this competition, and that was to get Nini as one's chère amie.

For some little while the honours were equally divided, and not one of us had succeeded in making a rendezvous with her outside. Well, one day I turned up for lunch very much later than usual, and the restaurant was almost empty—all my friends had been and gone. I had Nini all to myself, and you may be sure I did not lose my chance, and by the time I had finished she had promised to meet me that evening after her work was over. I remember how elated I felt all that afternoon, though I took care not to let any of the fellows know of my good-fortune. I intended to let them see me walk in with her in nonchalant manner to the café where we usually met of an evening, and to nod to them en passant, as though it was quite a usual occurrence our being out together.

I was at the rendezvous punctually, as may be imagined. It was at a corner of the Place de la Bourse, a very quiet neighbourhood at night. There was only one person in sight when I arrived, a very ordinary-looking female dressed in the nondescript garb of the French ouvrière—neither smart nor shabby, but just one of hundreds one passes in the street without noticing, though her hat might have attracted attention, for it was simply ludicrous. On seeing me, she gave a little run in my direction, exclaiming joyfully, "Oh que je suis contente de vous voir arriver—je pensais être en retard."

I was dumbfounded. This could not be our Eugénie—the delightful little person we had all been raving about for days past—this graceless, ill-dressed wench. I could hardly believe my eyes; and she evidently noticed my surprise, for she remarked with a giggle which still further jarred on my nerves, "Vous ne me reconnaissez plus dans mon costume de travail."

I made some sort of lame protest, whilst rapidly cogitating as to the best way to get away from her, as I felt it was quite out of the question being seen with such a scarecrow. I would not dare to take her to even the smallest café in case I met someone I knew—I should be chaffed out of my life if I did. Necessity is the mother of invention.

An idea occurred to me, and without a moment's hesitation I said, "Something imprévue has occurred since I saw you at déjeuner; one of our friends, suddenly taken ill, wants to see me urgently, so I must go off at once. I should have let you know by telegram, but thought it better to wait and see you and explain personally. You really must forgive me if I run off immediately, as I'm already late. We must arrange for another evening, if you will, Nini," I added with hypocritical earnestness.

She was naturally disappointed, but there was nothing to be said under the circumstance.

"C'est très malheureux," was her remark, "mais ce sera pour un autre soir."

"HIS APPEARANCE OF INTENSE RESPECTABILITY."

I was so delighted at the success of my ruse that I actually snatched a kiss before hurrying off. I never went to lunch in the Rue Vivienne again; as I explained to my friends, it doesn't do to stick to the same place too long—one wants to vary one's cuisine. They may have thought a lot, but they said nothing.

It was about this time that I first sold a picture —not for a very big sum, but still it was a sale— and it came about in a very curious and unexpected fashion. There was a middle-aged, prosperous-looking man who used to come and work occasionally at Julians as a sort of amateur student; we nicknamed him the "petit rentier"—as in fact he was. He and I somehow, in spite of the difference of our ages, became very pally, and he eventually joined our little group. He was not an excessively amusing chap, but his appearance of intense respectability gave tone henceforth to our table at the café. One day he turned up at my room to look at an ambitious little painting I was just completing. I forget the subject now, but I remember that to my surprise he said, "I like it very much, and if you will paint me in it I will give you two hundred francs for it when it's finished."

I didn't require much persuasion to accept his magnificent offer—so he came and sat for me and the work was completed, and to my great satisfaction I pocketed two crisp hundred-franc notes,

and he took away the canvas under his arm, genuinely pleased with the bargain, I believe. Well, he turned out quite an Art patron for me after this deal with him—for one day shortly after he came to me with an offer from a friend of his, a business man, who wanted his wife's portrait painted, and would give me five hundred francs for it if I cared to undertake it. Again no hesitation on my part; so it was arranged that I should do the painting at their appartement in the Rue Bergère. I well remember this, my first serious attempt at portraiture. The lady was a stout Jewess—of not unprepossessing appearance, but extremely vain—and it was only with the greatest difficulty that I dissuaded her from wearing all her lace and family jewels; not that I thought they were unbecoming, but because I felt that I had bargained to paint her portrait only, not her domestic wealth as well. So she eventually fell in with my suggestion, and consented to being depicted as I wished.

Oh! the bother and annoyance before I completed that portrait. Perhaps it was because I was only a youngster that she thought my time was of no account, for she would make appointments and put them off at a moment's notice, or not feel equal to sitting when I got to the house, and all manner of excuses; till at last I felt that if ever I finished the portrait I should have really well earned the five hundred francs. However,

it was at length finished and her husband and the family seemed to like it—at any rate, I was paid; that was all that concerned me. I did not want any more commissions for portraits for a time after that first experience; it was a positive relief to feel myself free once more—as I had been at her beck and call for weeks.

CHAPTER IX

I am introduced at the Café de la Rochefoucauld—The habitués of the café—Distinguished men one met there—A Whistler anecdote—Petites dames—Models—La Sagatore—La Belle Laure and her tragic ending—English girls at the café, and a joke on one of them—A favourite with the ladies—A witty remark—Stray clients at the café—The end of the Café de la Rochefoucauld—Bohemianism and some curious predicaments—Humorous situation.

LIVING in Montmartre meant, as I soon realised, an almost complete changement d'habitudes—especially after returning from work. Most of my friends lived some distance off, so it was a trifle lonely at first at the Rue de la Rochefoucauld, as may be imagined.

Stott had decided to remain in his beloved Quartier when in Paris, as he was away a good deal painting in Brittany and elsewhere, the open air having more charm for him than the atelier. I was sorry to see less of him, for from the very first day we met we had been very much en sympathie, and had become the greatest of chums. Moreover, I was a great admirer of his work. Still there was no help for it, as I could not persuade him to migrate with me.

The evenings especially were very dull, for the first week or so after I had moved in—as I knew nothing whatever of my new quarter.

One day, however, I walked back with an English chap who was also painting at Julians, and he asked me what became of me after leaving the atelier, that he never saw me. I told him how slow I found it, as I had not yet discovered the artists' haunts of the neighbourhood.

"You don't mean to say you don't know the Café de la Rochefoucauld?" he asked.

I had to admit I didn't, so he took me there to dinner that evening, and I found myself at once in the midst of the most interesting coterie of Montmartre. Although quite a cheap place, déjeuner two francs, diner 2.50 vin compris, the Café de la Rochefoucauld was quite unique of its kind. It was a tiny little place where one would not have thought of going to au hasard—one might have passed it every day without noticing it; neither outwardly nor inwardly was it of any pretension. Its habitués made of it what it was, the cheeriest and most interesting rendezvous of the neighbourhood.

But the Rochefoucauld was not a café in the ordinary sense of the word, as there were hundreds in Montmartre. It was an exclusive little artistic rendezvous frequented by some of the most distinguished and talented men in Paris at that time, and where one had to be introduced before one could become an habitué. One constantly met

men there whose names are still famous, as for instance—Albert Wolff the brilliant and witty Art critic, Gérome, in whose atelier I was, Gervex, Chartran, Carrier-Belleuse, Humbert, Cormon, Dupray, Degas, and last but not least, Whistler, whenever he was in Paris. The author of the "Gentle art of making enemies" was as famous in Paris as a bel esprit as he was as an artist, and I remember a story they used to tell which struck me as a rare specimen of his humour. One evening he was dining at a friend's house and the dinner was a very lively affair. During the evening the artist remembered he wanted to write a telegram or something—so was shown into a room on the floor above. Shortly afterwards a sound as of something falling down the stairs was heard; everyone rushed out to see what it was, and found the little man just picking himself up and looking very perturbed.

"Are you hurt?" they all exclaimed.

"Who was the architect of this house?" was the extraordinary reply they got.

Some name was given—I forget who.

"Damned teetotaller," Whistler ejaculated with a hiccup.

Old Goupil, the big picture-dealer of the Rue Chaptal, Gérome's father-in-law, also used to come there; he was the richest man of the crowd—yet was so mean that he never tipped the waiter more than a sou, and it was said would take home with

him the sugar of his coffee. Then I must not forget Richard Tripp, the expert on the Barbizon School—"Timide," as he was nicknamed—why I don't know, except perhaps because he was the very reverse—one of the most popular men in Paris, who was the life of the café and without whom no escapade or festivity was complete; Walter Dowdeswell, who would drop in occasionally when over from London; and a cousin of mine, Charlie Jephson, who was on the Bourse. These are only a few of the names of men I can recollect for the moment, but they will suffice to convey some idea of the varied clientèle of the Café de la Rochefoucauld in those days. As may be imagined, I found it a great contrast to the students' haunts I had become accustomed to in the Quartier.

The ebullition of youth was still en evidence, as many young men were to be seen there; but it was somewhat sobered by the presence of those of more mature years—still there was a good deal of practical joking, but it was of a rather wittier description than that practised by the youngsters of the École. Animated and amusing discussions would take place over dinner on subjects which were unknown in the Quartier. Altogether it was an indication that in appreciating this entourage one was beginning to take one's pleasures less boisterously—that the étudiant stage was passing.

It was Bohemia of a different type—as was also

evidenced by the class of petites dames who were habituées of the café; for amongst them were some of the most celebrated of the artists' models in Paris. Sagatore, "La Sagatore" as she was called, a very handsome Italian woman who sat for Gérome principally; Gabrielle, Ellen André, La Grande Louise, and La Belle Laure who sat chiefly for Humbert and Cormon, to mention only some who were famous for beauty of face and figure in those days. Most of the best-known models ended by "retiring" and going on the stage, or taking up business or getting married; or, still more frequently, finding rich amants.

The last I heard of La Sagatore, she was running a restaurant of her own and giving an excellent Italian cuisine, which she personally superintended. Ellen André became quite a well-known actress. I believe Gabrielle married a rich champagne merchant, and La Grande Louise made a big success as a music-hall singer.

La Belle Laure's butterfly career ended in a tragedy of so thrilling and extraordinary a character that even now I can recall every detail of it. She was, as I have said, one of the most beautiful of the models in Paris, and used to sit principally for "odalisques," which will convey some idea how lovely was her face and how exquisite her figure. In addition to these physical attractions, she was young, dressed with wonderful taste, and was the most amusing chatterbox imaginable. She had

started in her career as a model with everything in her favour, and was not long before she captivated a rich and good-looking young fellow, a promising author, and became his mistress.

All went well for some months and we saw them continually at the Rochefoucauld, when there appeared on the scene an elderly engineer, a very distinguished man, but a sort of sneering Mephistopheles, with no respect at all for women. He was old enough to be her father; but to the astonishment of everyone La Belle Laure fell in love with him. What she saw in him was a mystery to us all, for he was, from a man's point of view, not particularly good-looking nor attractive as a personality; but the fact remained, and from this moment she became his âme damnée, as it were. As she herself expressed it plaintively on one occasion to a friend of hers, " I am his slave—body and soul—and I cannot explain why I care for him as I do—for he has no regard for me, and never misses an opportunity to make me jealous and unhappy." It was a totally incomprehensible state of affairs, for she was still the mistress of the young author who worshipped the ground she trod on, although he must have known what was going on—unless he was exceptionally dense or wilfully blind. To give an example. On one occasion she was dining with him at the café when the other man looked in at the door and made a sign to her. She turned pale, and then making some

excuse went out, to return in a few minutes in such a perturbed state that we all noticed it—but her amant said nothing.

What she suffered at the hands of the other man we could only guess from what she told us at times. It appeared that he used to enjoy making her jealous—would purposely let her see him with other women when he had asked her to meet him, and so forth. This continued for some time till at last it got on her mind and she began to look ill; then one day she did not turn up as usual at the café. We then learned, to our horror, that she had committed suicide by taking a poison she had obtained by soaking phosphorous matches in water. She did not die, however, immediately, but lingered for some hours—during which time everything that was possible was done to save her, but without avail. Then came the pathos of it all; at the last moment the poor girl clung desperately to life, all her old coquetry returned, and she wanted to live —but it was too late. Her amant, broken-hearted, nursed her, so they said, as tenderly as a sister of mercy. The man who was the cause of her mad deed pleaded hard to be allowed to see her, but her love had turned to implacable hatred.

"Never," she cried, "will I see him again—for he it is who caused me to do this."

The sequel to her death was equally tragic and extraordinary. A fortnight later the engineer committed suicide by shooting himself; it had got

on his brain the girl having refused to see him before she died—and a fortnight after that the young author threw himself out of his window and killed himself. It seemed almost as if she had communicated to the two men the suggestion of suicide. Thus ended the most poignant romance of Bohemian life in Paris I ever heard of.

All the models who used to come to the café were girls who took their work seriously—with them it was strictly business all the time, and one soon realised that, if one had thought otherwise at first. Of course it must not be inferred from all this that there were only models at the café, for many men brought their petites amies, and two of the latter were quite amusing characters in their way. They were both Londoners, curiously enough, for one would scarcely have expected English girls in this out-of-the-way place. They were dancers at the Folies Bergères, and generally turned up for dinner before going to their work; they ended by becoming great favourites, which was somewhat remarkable, as neither of them could speak a word of French—indeed it was a matter of wonder how they managed to get about as they did. This entire ignorance of the language led to a rather funny joke a man at the café got up expressly for our benefit.

One of the two girls was very pretty—fair hair, nice teeth, good figure, blue eyes—a credit, in fact, to the Old Country, and a marked contrast

to the swarthy type of French woman. To look at her you wouldn't have believed that butter would melt in her little mouth, and it was this artless appearance that prompted the joke. One night at dinner when she was trying to make herself understood, much to our amusement, someone who spoke English offered to teach her to speak French. As he was a good-looking fellow she accepted his offer. We thought no more of it, till to our amazement some few days later she came out with some of the most awful words in French it is possible to conceive. Her preceptor had taught her phrases, to express the simplest thoughts, that I would not dare to repeat here. If she wanted to say the most ordinary thing, such as, for instance, " Please pass me the mustard," or anything equally trivial, she used language that would have made a sailor's hair curl—and the worst of it was she had learned all this in utter innocence, believing it was a translation of what she would say in English. It may be imagined the expression of amazement on strangers' faces when they heard such words issuing from the pretty lips of this dainty English miss. It took a long time before she managed to unlearn all she had learned, and she was very chary of French words for a long while after she found out how she had been hoaxed.

Besides these two girls there were several others who use to come to lunch and dinner nearly every day. One often wondered what their lovers saw

"ONE OF THE GIRLS WAS VERY PRETTY, FAIR HAIR, NICE TEETH, GOOD FIGURE, BLUE EYES."

in them, for they were seldom attractive in appearance, and frequently well past their youthful days.

I recollect there was a musician who had the reputation of being a great favourite with the ladies; he told me one day how charming his girl was, and that he would like me to see her—so we arranged to dine together, when, to my astonishment, after his glowing description, I saw quite a plain and homely female, of uncertain age, of the sort that one would pass in the street without looking at twice. "She must indeed have some hidden attraction for my friend t rave about her as he does," thought I.

The next time we met at the café he eagerly asked what I thought of her.

I replied evasively that she was very sympathique, but not quite my type.

He instinctively gathered my meaning.

"She may not perhaps be beautiful in the face as beauty goes," he retorted, "but you should see her feet, they are adorable."

This reminds me of a witty way I once heard of describing in a nice manner a plain-looking girl. "It is true she is not pretty, but she has a good heart and she loves her mother."

There were very seldom fresh faces to be seen at the café—so it was not the place in which to seek an "aventure"; as a matter of fact, the place had become, as it were, so exclusively the pro-

perty of those who habitually frequented it, that if by any chance a stray client or a family party happened to come in it was immediately the signal for an outburst of language so awful, and stories so blue, that they had to leave.

The Café de la Rochefoucauld has long ceased to exist, and its last days were almost dramatically pathetic. For some time previous the proprietors had been struggling against misfortune, in the shape of the café no longer paying—competition, increase in cost of food, bad debts.

There were many old habitués who had owed money for months—almost years, who were unable to settle up, yet could not be turned away for fear the café should look too empty. The end was bound to come, and come it did, and with a crash one evening. The gas was cut off, the butcher and baker refused to deliver any more meat or bread, and the patron sadly announced that there was no dinner to serve. So determined, however, were we all not to go elsewhere if we could possibly help it, that we all went out and bought charcuterie and petits pains and butter and cheese and candles which we stuck in bottles. There was still plenty of wine in the cellar, so we managed a dinner of sorts, though it was a very cheerless one, as we all realised this was the last night of the old Café de la Rochefoucauld; and so it proved, for the next day the place was bolted and barred, and shortly afterwards sold up.

The Rochefoucauld was a Bohemian centre in every sense of the word—Bohemianism that cannot exist nowadays, unhappily. It was very kindly and genuine; so long as a man was a good fellow and was introduced, as it were, into it, he was as welcome as any of the most distinguished of its habitués. There was no trace of snobbishness in the crowd, although talent certainly did inspire much respect; and I admit we youngsters were all very proud of the distinguished company one so often saw there. The possible possession of wealth carried no weight whatever, and, above all, no idle curiosity was ever evinced as to a man's means; nor were they discussed, unless he himself mentioned the subject.

As an instance of this, I recall a peculiar mystery surrounding one of the most genial of the men we constantly met. He was supposed to be a writer on the Press, but no one knew for what paper he worked; and since he vouchsafed no information on the subject he was not asked—suffice it he was a good chap, paid his whack, was always well-dressed, and was liked generally by the men and the women. The mystery lay in the fact that during all the years he had been coming to the Rochefoucauld no one had got to know anything about him, or where he lived even. He would generally be the last to leave the café, would sometimes walk a short distance with other men on their way home, then with a friendly good night

leave them and disappear—no one knew where—till the following day. His secretiveness naturally excited comment, but no remarks were ever made before him on the subject. His life was indeed one of those enigmas which can only exist in Bohemia.

Bohemianism, however, as we understood it, was often very amusing in a way, and not infrequently brought about curious predicaments; and in this connection I recall rather a funny incident. One day a friend of ours, who had been away for some time painting in the country, turned up at the café for lunch, and announced his intention of passing the night in Paris, so as to spend a few hours with us and go to a café concert or somewhere and have a good time. He was a very jolly fellow, and under ordinary circumstances we should have been delighted; but he had come up from the country in such extraordinary attire that the idea of being seen with such a scarecrow was out of the question. We were not squeamish on the point of dress, but his get-up was the limit—even for Montmartre; his hat, coat, waistcoat, and boots looked as if they had been collected from a rubbish-heap. Still we didn't like to hurt his feelings by telling him so, as he might have been hard up and not able to afford anything better—when after lunch someone had the happy inspiration to suggest our rigging him up for the evening in, as he put it nicely, " a less countrified costume." After

"THEY WERE DANCERS AT THE FOLIES' BERGÈRES."

a little demur he accepted, so we managed to get him up somehow and arranged to dine at the Petit Riche in the Rue le Pelletier, and spend the evening on the Grands Boulevards. When we all met for our aperitif at the Café Cardinal he looked quite respectable as compared to when he arrived in the morning, and he seemed to realise it also.

Then suddenly the humour of the situation struck us, and with one accord we all began to " rag " him, and during dinner we were continually getting at him—as, for instance, whilst he was eating his soup the man the coat and waistcoat belonged to said in a mock injured tone, " I say, old man, you might try to be a bit careful—you're dropping soup all down my waistcoat; you wouldn't do it if it was your own." Then someone else said, " Don't forget that's my collar you've got on —you'll pull it all out of shape if you twist your head about like that "; and other equally idiotic remarks—much to our own amusement and that of the people sitting near who could hear it all.

In the street after dinner we began chipping him about the boots. " You needn't walk in all the mud you can find, old fellow—please remember they are not your boots you've got on," and so forth —and so it went on all the evening. It was very funny, we thought, and we were roaring with laughter the whole time, and he took it all in very good part till at last, after many consommations at

different cafés, he began to get a bit huffy at our persistent ragging, and threw out a hint that it was about time we stopped it.

This of course only had the effect of increasing our merriment. He then said some nasty things, and suddenly, as we were walking along the Boulevard de la Madeleine, he stopped, and to our surprise sat down on a seat and took off his boots, and then his coat and waistcoat and collar and tie, and flinging them with his hat on to the seat he exclaimed, " Here, take back your damned things, I won't wear them any longer." In vain did we endeavour to appease his wrath—he absolutely refused to put them on again. Meanwhile a crowd began to collect, and we looked like being in for an unpleasant affair. " You've had your joke all the evening," he yelled, " now I'll have mine, and you won't get rid of me till I want to go—and you can do what you like with the clothes, I only wore them to oblige you."

Of course we couldn't leave the things on the seat, so in a very sheepish way we picked them up in silence—since it was evidently useless arguing with him. We then hailed a cab, thinking that the best thing to do was to get him home, but he wouldn't get in.

" Oh no, you are not going to get out of it like that—we are going to walk back," he said in a tone that meant mischief.

There was no help for it; we felt the best

thing was to humour him, so we paid off the cabman and started walking down the Rue Caumartin—to the vast amusement of the people who had gathered round and who were following us. They evidently thought our companion was an escaped lunatic.

Well, to cut a long story short we managed to get him back to the hotel where he was staying —but only with great difficulty, as he wanted to stop on the way and fight us all; and it was with a feeling of relief that we saw the door close on him. As we talked the incident over at a café afterwards, we were all agreed that it was a bit of luck we hadn't lent him a pair of trousers.

CHAPTER X

Cafés in Montmartre—The Nouvelles Athènes—The Rat Mort—The Place Blanche—Amusing experience—An incident on the Place Pigalle—The Abbaye de Thélème—The Élysée Montmartre—The Moulin de la Galette—The fast women in the Rue Bréda and the Quartier de Notre Dame de Lorette—Brasseries and cafés—The frail sisterhood—The underworld of Montmartre—The artists' colony—Studios—Artists' models on the Place Pigalle—The studio district—The inception of the Cabaret du Chat Noir—Rodolphe Salis "Gentilhomme Cabaretier"—Removal of the Cabaret to the Rue de Laval—Remarkable procession—A midnight escapade—Artistic surroundings of the Chat Noir—The theatre—Famous productions—Array of talent—Great success of the Cabaret—Imitation Chat Noirs—The Lion d'Or—New school of decoration.

THERE were, of course, many other cafés in Montmartre which were also frequented by artists—the Nouvelle Athènes on the Place Pigalle and the one on the Place Blanche, to mention only two where we used to go occasionally.

Alluding to these cafés reminds me of a very curious though perhaps amusing experience I had on one occasion. A charming lady (they were all charming in those days) had promised to lunch with me, and wrote to say she would meet me

at the café on the Place Blanche at one o'clock. I was delighted, and got there ten minutes before the time so as not to keep her waiting in case she was punctual. I ordered an aperitif, and not having read the paper that morning I called for the *Figaro*. Absorbed in my reading I did not notice the time; then suddenly I thought of it, and looked at my watch. It was half-past one. She was half an hour late; surely something must have happened to prevent her keeping the appointment. All of a sudden it flashed through my mind, as I looked round, that our rendezvous was at the café on the Place Blanche, and that I was seated at the Nouvelle Athènes on the Place Pigalle. How it came about I cannot explain, except that it must have been a fit of abstraction on my part.

Well, in less time than it takes to relate I had paid the waiter, and was running as fast as I could to the Place Blanche a few hundred yards distant —but she was not there. When I got back to my room after lunch I found a note from her telling me she had waited for me for half an hour, and hoped there had been no misunderstanding as to the appointment. She was good-natured enough to forgive me, and lunched with me another day, when I explained the contretemps, putting it down, as she said laughingly, to my temperament d'artiste. Not many women would have been so kind.

At the opposite corner of the Place Pigalle was

the Rat Mort, then a place of unpleasant repute even for Montmartre—as it had the reputation of being frequented only by ladies and gentlemen of certain proclivities. Still it gradually seemed to improve, and the usual habitués migrating elsewhere apparently, it then got to be known that they gave an excellent table d'hôte dinner with vin à discretion at 2.25, and it was by degrees taken up till at last one could actually be seen going in without any chaffing remarks being made afterwards; whilst it eventually also became a place where one sat outside and took one's coffee and so forth.

The life on the Place Pigalle was very interesting to watch from the terrasse of either of the cafés, especially of an evening before dinner; there was always a stream of petites ouvrières on their way home, and if it were at all muddy one would get a gratuitous display of dainty ankles.

I remember sitting with some pals outside the Rat Mort one summer evening taking our aperitifs. It had been raining but had cleared up. We were in a larky sort of mood. Suddenly one of us exclaimed, "What a lovely leg that girl's got crossing over there; if her face is anything to match she must be a real beauty."

"Well, it's easily found out," I remarked.

"How?"

"By going after her and having a look, of course," I replied, making a movement as though

AT THE CAFÉ.

I were about to do so; but at that moment the object of our curiosity turned round to avoid a passing cab, and revealed the most charming of faces and figures. She was indeed chic and attractive, and we all gave an exclamation of approval.

"You are so daring, Price," said one of the chaps—"I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll bet you five francs you don't go after her and bring her back to dinner."

"I don't like to encourage your extravagance," I replied in the same vein, "but I'll take on your bet all the same."

"I'll make it a bottle of wine as well, that you don't even get her to speak to you."

"Done with you," I replied, and picking up my hat and stick I dashed across the road after the beautiful stranger. I felt that my reputation as a "blood" was at stake, so had no hesitation.

Just as she reached the opposite side of the Boulevard, and was walking up the Rue Houdon, I caught her up. I was breathless both with excitement and with hurrying. Without pausing I raised my hat and blurted out, "Pardon me, Mademoiselle, for speaking to you, but will you help me make a fortune?"

She stopped dead, and looked at me with astonishment, amazed for a moment at my impertinence in speaking to her, for she was evidently not the type of girl to be à la recherche d'une aventure.

"Que me voulez-vous, Monsieur?" she ejaculated; then noting perhaps that I was not an evil-looking ruffian, she added, "Je ne vous connais pas."

But that in itself was sufficient; it only remained with me to start a conversation. In the distance I could see my friends at the café standing up, the better to watch developments. I had an inspiration which I flattered myself afterwards was a masterpiece.

"It's this way, Mademoiselle," I said; "I am an artist and I am looking for a specially beautiful face for a picture I am going to paint, and as you passed I said to myself that if I could only persuade you to sit for me my fortune is made. So you can help me if you will; anyhow I offer you my apologies for venturing to accost you."

It was bold introduction, but it caught on. Although she repeated, "Mais je ne vous connais pas, Monsieur," I could see she was not really angry, now she knew my reason for stopping her; so one portion of the bet was already won—now for the other. But in these few minutes I had realised that she was no ordinary girl like one could meet any day in Montmartre; so I quickly made up my mind that if I could help it the adventure should not end so abruptly. The ice was now broken, so after some persuasion I got her to let me accompany her just a little way whilst I told her all about my picture—which needless

to say had only just been evolved from my imagination.

"Vous êtes un Monsieur bien original," she said, as with some hesitation she consented; adding, "Mais seulement un petit bout de chemin."

I soon discovered, and to my surprise, for I had hoped for something different, that she was quite a respectable girl, living with her people in the Rue Lepic, and was employed as vendeuse at a big millinery establishment in the Rue Royale. We strolled on for quite a long while getting more and more friendly, till she gradually threw off her reserve of manner and remarked naïvely that anyone to see us would take us for old friends; and then I remembered the bet and felt almost ashamed of myself for having told her such a lot of fibs. When, however, she said she must be getting home, and I then suggested her dining with me instead, she wouldn't hear of it for a moment.

"Une autre fois, peut-être, mais pas ce soir"; besides, she was expected home. After a deal of persuasion I managed to get her to give me an address where I could write her, and she promised to meet me another evening; then she hurried away.

When I got back to the café my friends had nearly finished dinner; they gave a roar of laughter when I appeared alone, and the one who had made the bet began to chaff me mildly. I pulled out a five-franc piece and handed it to him, saying,

"You have won that part of the bet, old man, but I'll have the bottle of wine with you, at any rate." They started asking a lot of questions, but I refused to be drawn.

"Comme il est malin, ce vieux Price," they declared.

I wondered if they guessed the luck the bet had brought me.

A few days later we met again, but not by accident this time, and I took her to a very quiet restaurant away from my artistic haunts; and we sat right in a corner in case anyone should happen to come in who knew her at home, and we had a simple little dinner which she chose herself—and then I told her all about the bet and she wasn't the least bit angry, but laughed heartily and said, "On m'a toujours dit que les Anglais sont monotones, mais vous ne l'êtes pas au moins." Then we strolled back through quiet streets in quite spoony fashion, and I snatched an occasional kiss in dark doorways; and it was very nice and all that—but it wasn't a bit what I had expected, for she had to get in early unless she was going to a theatre, she told me. One evening, "when her parents knew me," she would perhaps be allowed to stay out later. We had a very peaceful, pleasant evening, and I promised to write and fix another appointment; but on thinking it all over afterwards I came to the conclusion that it would be better for us both not to meet again—so I didn't write.

"THE WHOLE DISTRICT WAS FULL OF WOMEN AND THEIR SOUTENEURS."

Next door to the Rat Mort on the Place Pigalle an artist's house, I think it was Stevens, with studio and garden, had just been bought by some enterprising restaurateur who had conceived the original idea of turning it all into a high-class restaurant; so one lunched or dined in the salle à manger and the salon and the big studio upstairs, whilst during the summer it was pleasant to take one's coffee under the tree in the garden which overlooked the Place. To this new place was given the artistic and resounding appellation of the Abbaye de Thélème. The prices were just a trifle higher than elsewhere in the neighbourhood, but very moderate considering.

Montmartre in those days was a very different place to what it is now, and no one could ever have imagined it would have developed into such a fashionable resort at night. The Moulin Rouge was not dreamed of. The chief place of amusement was the Élysée Montmartre a dancing-hall on the Boulevard Rochechouart, where all the smartest and the fastest girls and the artists' models were to be found. Everybody used to go there, and it was quite the only thing to do on Saturday and Sunday nights during the winter. One was pretty sure to find an "aventure" there also if one was looking for one. On Sundays, in the afternoon, there was dancing up at the Moulin de la Galette, a quaint ramshackle old place on the heights of Montmartre.

This was quite a picturesque spot close to the fortifications, on the top of a steep hill. It was almost rural in its seclusion, and was more like a corner in a small provincial town than a portion of busy Paris; the view one obtained from the terrace alone was worth the arduous climb up the ill-paved streets to reach it, and many people went up only for this, and with no intention of dancing. The ballroom was very primitive, as it had evidently been a big barn originally, and there was no pretence at all at luxury about it or the gardens surrounding it. Close by was the battered ruin of an old mill, from which it got its name. Here the crowd was of a very rough description; though one often met artists up there, it was not at all artistic. One was charged twopence a dance, and a man used to collect this during the dances. There were always a lot of pretty girls there, but it was a somewhat risky thing to ask anyone you didn't know to dance with you, as it was more than probable her " macquereau " was close by, and he and his pals might set on you when you got outside. This was constantly happening, as there was never more than one policeman on duty in the hall. Artists would go up there to look for a pretty model, and have a very bad time if they went up alone and were too venturesome.

Although it was the artists' quarter it was also a hot-bed of vice. The whole of the district round where I lived was full of women and their

souteneurs, and in the Rue Bréda and round about on a warm summer evening one would see dozens of them hanging out of their windows in the scantiest of attire, and they would often beckon one to come up if they thought one looked like a possible client. I never accepted one of these invitations myself, but men told me they had at times, if they felt they wanted cheering up before dinner, instead of having an aperitif. There was, however, no necessity to go out of one's way to look up at the windows for such adventures if one were so minded, as the streets of the Quartier de Notre Dame de Lorette fairly reeked with cocottes, and they were to be seen everywhere—gorgeously dressed in the latest of fashion, and painted up to their eyes. There were any number of brasseries and cafés which were crowded with them of a night —where one saw every possible grade of frail sisterhood.

I shall never forget my first impressions of one of these places. It was close on daybreak. In the hot, fetid atmosphere, reeking with musk and the fumes of stale tobacco smoke, the crowd of wanton women with their painted and powdered faces and tawdry finery appeared almost inhuman. I remember that on looking round I wondered what attraction, sensually or otherwise, these bedizened trollops could possibly present, even to the most drunken debauchee, for most of them were quite middle-aged, and I did not see one with any

pretension to good-looks. There were very few men in the café, and the women sat at the tables in gloomy silence, for time was getting on and soon the place would be closing, and then naught would remain but to make their way wearily to the all-night houses near the Halles Centrales, the last hope of the Paris street-walker—out of luck.

It was indeed a picture of the underworld of a great city. There were also not a few places in the neighbourhood which enjoyed a peculiar notoriety distinctly Parisian, where the sterner sex were seldom to be seen. In fact so "hot" was the district that I often wondered if any respectable female really lived in it. The artists' colony adjoined, and in places overlapped it—whether by accident or design one can only surmise; anyhow, one would find studios in all the streets around the Place Pigalle—whilst along the Boulevard there seemed to be one in every house, judging from the immense windows facing north; in fact some houses consisted only of studios. The frame-makers and colour merchants apparently thrived well in this quarter, for there were numbers of them. Artists' models, mostly Italians, male and female, used to loiter about the centre of the Place Pigalle waiting for a job—and with their picturesque costumes imparted a bright welcome note of colour on a sunny morning.

The studio district stretches now right up the heights of Montmartre—but I am only concerned

"THE WOMEN SAT AT THE TABLES IN GLOOMY SILENCE."

with the part where I lived at that time, and which was the original colony—the Boulevard Rochechouart, the Boulevard de Clichy, and some of the neighbouring streets. It now extends as far as the Parc Monceau. No description of the quarter would be complete without some mention of the famous Cabaret du Chat Noir which had just been opened in the Rue de Laval (now the Rue Victor Massé) by the artist, poet, and writer, Rodolphe Salis.

Originally started on the Boulevard Rochechouart in 1881, in a modest shop which served as studio for Salis, it became the rendezvous of all the eccentric artists, poets, musicians, and writers of Montmartre, who gave full vent to the most revolutionary theories in their work, whilst ostensibly drinking the comparatively harmless beer of France. These reunions gradually became talked about and other people outside the little set became attracted to the place. The growing éclat of the coterie decided Salis to transform his studio into an artistic cabaret which he described as being under the proprietorship of a "Gentilhomme Cabaretier" and "pour verser a boire a tous ceux qui gagnent artistiquement le soif."

The walls were plentifully adorned with old tapestry and other quaint decorations and paintings, as well as with busts of the original members. A magnificent black cat, which had served as model to several artists, was the oriflamme of the

little establishment which henceforth blazoned out under the sonorous appellation of " L'Institut " (a skit on the famous temple of Science and Art of Paris), and where only those who made their living by their intellect were eligible as members. Gradually the vogue of the place spread amongst the artists and writers away from Montmartre, and it became generally known as the " Chat Noir." The artistic soirées of Salis began to be talked about; the tickets of invitation to these gatherings were eagerly sought after, till at length the modest ci-devant shop became too small to contain all those who wished to be present.

In the face of such extraordinary success, Salis decided to move the " Institut " to more important and convenient premises in the Rue de Laval in 1885. The removal of the cabaret from its old quarters was made in the most original and fantastic style—as might have been expected from so many fertile brains. At eleven at night a remarkable and picturesque procession was formed, and to the accompaniment of weird music the members marched through the streets with their bag and baggage to their " new home "; whilst the whole quarter turned out to witness the most curious spectacle that had ever been offered to Montmartre. The festivity in connection with the removal of the " Chat Noir " continued late in the night, and some of the younger and more boisterous of the followers of Salis were so carried away by the

exuberance of their spirits that they started playing pranks outside the cabaret, which might have landed them in trouble. As it was, they only escaped through a fortuitous circumstance which was quite amusing in itself.

About two in the morning half a dozen or so of young fellows, my cousin Jephson amongst them, after all sorts of hare-brained escapades, started scaling lamp-posts and turning out the gas. They were thus merrily engaged when some sergents de ville suddenly appeared on the scene, arrested them all, and conveyed them to the nearest poste de police, where they were brought before the officer on a charge of riotous behaviour. Though doubtless accustomed to such boyish pranks on the part of artists and students, he assumed a very grave air, expatiated on the heinousness of their conduct, and told them to their astonishment that they would have to prove their identity; also that unless they could find bail he would not let them out till they had seen the Commissaire the following day.

Here was a pretty ending to a night's amusement; but there was no help for it, since he refused to regard it all as a harmless joke, so they began producing letters and cards to prove their respectability. Jephson alone had neither a card nor a letter on him—but in searching his pockets he came across a "spoof" letter that a facetious London friend had posted to his rooms in the

Rue St Georges that day. It was addressed thus: "To the Right Honourable Lord Sir Charles Jephson, Esquire, N.B. R.S.V.P., etc. etc., dans son Hôtel de Saint Georges—à Paris."

In a spirit of banter he handed the envelope to the official, who read it attentively. The effect produced was astounding; he rose from his chair and with an obsequious bow assured Jephson that he would accept his assurance that he and all his friends would attend before the Commissaire when ordered to do so—or words to that effect. So they all trooped out of the station again, and curiously enough they heard no more of the affair; which perhaps proved that even in a Republican country like France a high-sounding title still carries weight.

The new habitation of the "Chat Noir" was a veritable museum, as all its members had contributed towards its embellishment by presenting artistic treasures in the shape of furniture, pictures, old china, pewter, armour, and tapestry. From the entrance and up to the second floor it was a series of surprises. A gigantic Swiss guard, halberd in hand, stood at the doorway; on entering one was confronted with a huge carved fireplace—flanked on either side by two grotesque black cats. The place had been designed on the lines of an old Flemish hostelry; the greatest humoristic artists of the day had decorated it, and it was unique in all its details. The beer tankards, glass,

AT THE "CHAT NOIR."

and crockery were delightful—even the waiters were picturesque, and, garbed as Academicians, bore themselves with becoming dignity. On the first floor was a tiny theatre where veritable chefs-d'œuvre were given by their authors by means of silhouettes on a white screen with a strong light behind.

When it is mentioned that such masters of satire as Caran d'Ache, Willette, Uzés, Pille, and Henri Rivière collaborated in their production, it will be realised how spirituelle were those shows. L'Épopée, La tentation de Saint Antoine, and L'enfant Prodigue amongst others became famous, and attracted all Paris. Quite an attroupement of talent was gradually gathered at the " Chat Noir "—and Alphonse Allais, Jules Jouy, Maurice Donnay, Jean Rameau, A. Masson, Mouloya, MacNab, and Delmet all gave readings of their first compositions here.

For some years these and other equally clever attractions drew crowds to the Rue de Laval; but as nothing succeeds like success, rivals in the shape of other quaint cabarets and brasseries gradually sprung up. There were more men in Montmartre with original ideas, and so it came about that the inception and success of the " Chat Noir " undoubtedly brought about extraordinary changes, not only in the life of Montmartre but in the world of entertainment generally. In a very few years there were imitation " Chat Noirs " all over the district,

and then the rage extended to the Grands Boulevards, where a delightfully decorated and appointed restaurant, built also on the lines of an old Flemish auberge, was opened under the name of the Lion d'Or, in the Rue du Helder. Many others, too numerous to mention, followed—in all of which the original conception of Salis could be traced—namely, to give scope to eccentric genius and original thought—with the result that a new school of decoration sprang up, which gradually ousted time-worn academic methods, and which still holds its own.

CHAPTER XI

Commission to paint portrait of Monsieur Thomas for the Salon—I make a start—A studio in the Rue de Reuilly—Amusing episode—The portrait finished—"Sending-in" day—"Accepted"—A little dinner to celebrate event—A funny incident—The lady and the lion—The Vernissage at the Salon—Coveted invitations—The eventful day—The scene outside the Palais de l'Industrie—The search for one's picture—The crowd—Smart people—Déjeuner at Ledoyens—The scene in the Sculpture Hall after lunch—A drive in the Bois and a bock at the Cascade.

Monsieur Thomas had promised me when I started work at the École that one day when I had got on a bit he would let me paint his portrait for the Salon. I now felt that the time had come when I might remind him of it—and, moreover, this would be my first attempt at exhibiting a picture. There were three months before sending in, but knowing what a busy man he was I felt my only chance of getting it completed in time would be if he would let me commence at once. To my delight he consented, and, good fellow that he was, he told me that he would pay me five hundred francs for it, with an extra five

hundred francs if it got hung. I wanted no such incentive, as I intended to try my best to make a success of the portrait; still it would certainly be five hundred francs the more if it got in, and the money would be very useful. I already started, in my mind, laying it out, in furniture principally.

The principal question was where to paint the great work, as I had no studio. This, however, was solved by the kind suggestion that I should do it at the Rue de Reuilly, where there was a good-sized room with the requisite north light. So one day I took a canvas, my easel, and my paint-box over there and made a start. We had decided that half life-size would be better than painting it in unwieldy dimensions, as one had to consider where it could be placed later. It was quite like a return to my early days at the École, when I found myself once more continually in the company of my old friends. Not that I had neglected them, but many things had happened during the two years and a half that had elapsed since I had come to Paris, and we had not seen each other quite so regularly as at first—when Sunday was my jour de famille. The old hearty welcome was still there though; they received me as they would have their own son—and, indeed, I felt as if it were my home I was returning to.

To move out the furniture and abandon the room entirely to me, in order to give me every chance of my doing my best, was the first step; and

in a very short time it was fixed up as cosily as if it had been a real studio. The idea that the whole house was being upset to suit me never seemed to occur to these kind-hearted people. Working under such delightful conditions, it is not to be wondered at that I put my best efforts into the portrait, and Monsieur Thomas helped me by sitting as often and as long as he could; in fact, his good-nature was quite remarkable—the recollection even now of one instance in particular still makes me smile. It is sufficiently amusing to be recounted.

In my enthusiastic endeavour to produce a masterpiece I was painstaking to a degree—and one day I evolved, as I thought, the brilliant idea that the high lights in the face could be studied better if some greasy matter was used so as to catch the light. It occurred to me that cold cream would serve this purpose without being unpleasant. My friend, without a second's hesitation, fell in with my views, and actually agreed to cover his face with cold cream for the purpose. I shall never forget the funny appearance he presented when this was done. It was a cold winter's day, yet he looked as though it was the height of summer, and that he was perspiring profusely.

I was getting on splendidly with my work and congratulating myself on this idea, when suddenly came a knock at the door. Monsieur was wanted immediately in his bureau—it was most urgent,

Completely forgetting the state of his face Monsieur Thomas dashed out of the room. I learned afterwards that it was an important customer who had called, and the effect on him of seeing Monsieur Thomas arrive in such an extraordinary condition could better be imagined than described. It took some explaining, and then they both laughed heartily—but there was no more cold cream after that; I had to do the high lights as best I could without.

I used to go there several days a week after leaving the École, get there in time for lunch, and have a couple of hours' painting after. So I managed to get the work completed well in time for sending-in day. On the previous evening several friends were invited to dinner especially to see the result of my labour, and of course nothing but compliments passed, as might have been expected—whatever they thought. Still, it was not altogether a bad portrait, and the best work I had yet done. It went in and I passed days of anxious waiting till the glad tidings came that it was accepted. Everyone at the Rue de Reuilly, even to the ouvriers, were delighted, for somehow they all seemed to be interested in my career, whilst up at Montmartre, amongst my artistic friends, we had a little dinner to celebrate the event, and several petites amies came, and we had a jolly evening.

But it was one thing to be accepted; it now

remained to be seen how I had been hung—for on that depended the success of the picture. I should know nothing of this till the "Vernissage," that most important of events, from the artist's point of view, of the whole year.

I remember a funny incident that occurred just before sending-in day, when several of us were in a friend's studio. He was a very clever painter of animals, and was exhibiting that year a very important subject, in which a magnificent lion figured prominently. We were all admiring the painting when another artist arrived accompanied by a lady—also to look at the picture. As we all knew each other we began chatting and discussing the work. The artist, I forgot to mention, was out at the time. The lady was immensely interested in the lion especially, and asked a lot of naïve questions as to how the painter had managed to get one to sit for him. This somehow started us joking, and she was told very seriously that the lion in question had been brought to the studio, and that there was no difficulty for an animal painter to get wild beasts as models, provided he could afford to pay the exorbitant fees asked by their owners for their services. In fact, large fortunes had been made by the lucky proprietors of giraffes, hippopotami, etc. All this was told with an air of the utmost sincerity, and she evidently believed every word of it—when she suddenly remarked, with a laugh, that she hoped

there were no lions about the studio, as she didn't like them unless they were in a cage.

"In a cage," someone reiterated. "Artists don't paint lions in cages; when they want them they are brought to the studios and left to roam about all over the place."

"But it must be very dangerous at times," said the lady.

"Yes, indeed," she was informed; "in fact so much so that that explained why this class of picture fetched such high prices, as several men had been devoured by their models."

A puzzled look came over the face of the demoiselle; then she suddenly seemed to think that we were having a joke at her expense, for she remarked with a laugh that perhaps there were a few lions still about the place.

"Rather," we told her; "he always keeps them in his bedroom; there is one in there now. Go and see for yourself; that's the door."

She hesitated, for all this had been told her most seriously; then probably to show she didn't believe us she went and opened the door and looked into the room. To our utter astonishment we heard something spring forward; there was what sounded like a bloodcurdling roar of a wild beast—and the lady, with a horrified shriek, dropped in a faint on the floor.

We rushed forward and found that the wild beast was a huge boarhound belonging to the

artist, which he had chained to the bed before going out, and it was in sheer delight at being visited that it had given the bark, which to our startled ears had sounded like a roar.

The lady soon recovered, and when she learned that the supposed lion was only a dog after all she quickly regained her composure, to our great relief; and she ended by laughing heartily at the extraordinary dénouement to our silly badinage—for the shock might easily have had serious results.

The "Vernissage" at the Salon was, in my time, not only the most important day of the year for the artist who was exhibiting, but also for the fashionable world of Paris, as it was looked upon as one of the principal events of the season. Although nominally the day on which the artist was invited to inspect, and, if necessary, varnish his work—and therefore quite a professional affair—it had gradually developed into a big society function. Everybody who fancied himself or herself had to be seen there. In those days invitations for the "Vernissage" were amongst the most coveted and sought after of anything during the Paris season. It followed, therefore, that year by year the crowd of people who had some claim to being invited to be present went on increasing in number till it at last occurred to the powers that it could be made into a paying as well as a fashionable affair, so they charged for admission instead of issuing invitations—and

now everyone with a louis to spare can be present at the "Vernissage." It has, therefore, become more a sort of expensive "dress rehearsal" before the ordinary opening day, though it still retains to a certain extent its old prestige. Needless to add, that the actual exhibitors do not pay for the privilege of being present. At the time I am about to describe, the "Vernissage" at the Palais de l'Industrie still retained its original éclat.

My carte entitled me to take a friend, so, of course, Monsieur Thomas accompanied me. He was as keen on going as I was, apart from the fact that his portrait was there—for he was not accustomed to attending society gatherings, the hospitable abode of the Rue de Reuilly being in every respect remote from the Faubourg St Germain or the Parc Monceau. My friends were estimable, simple bourgeois, without any pretensions to social rank.

If I remember rightly the Salon opened at the early hour of nine; anyhow we got there some time before—so as not to miss anything of this eventful day in my career, as I was exhibiting for the first time. It was indeed a motley crowd we saw on our arrival—for we were not the first by a great many. Of course at that matutinal hour only artists and their personal friends were present —the fashionable throng did not arrive till some hours later. Around us was Bohemia in its every aspect, from the well-to-do painter down to the

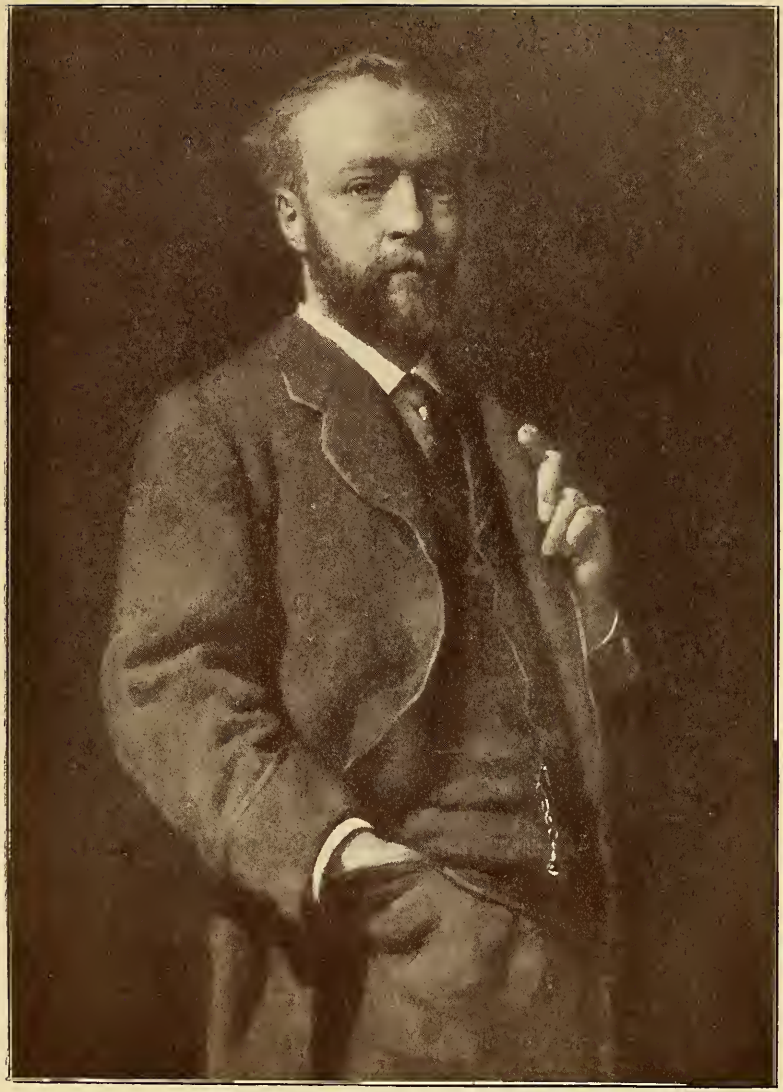
slovenly, ill-dressed, unkempt "rapin," whose principal claim to artistic merit usually consists in the length of his hair, his generally disreputable appearance, and a large paint-box hung on his shoulder. Amongst this singular assemblage was a plentiful sprinkling of the fair sex—mostly pretty young girls, probably bonnes amies or models; no gathering of French artists could be representative otherwise—and these were as outré in appearance as their cavaliers. One could almost fancy one recognised in the crowd our old friends, Mimi Pinson and Musette, whilst surely Rodolphe and Schaunard were also there in the flesh. It was indeed a curious scene, and over all was an air of enthusiasm and gaiety in the bright early morning sunshine, with all around radiant in the warmth of spring. It made an unforgettable impression on me, for I was only twenty-one at the time.

The doors opened at last, and after exchanging my Vernissage for an exhibitor's ticket—(how proud I felt when I signed my name on it)—we made our way upstairs to the galleries. Then began a wearisome search, for the catalogue was not ready, and there did not seem at first any method in the arrangement of the endless rooms. Everyone was rushing about hither and thither, apparently in the same aimless fashion. I felt so pleased at having been hung at all that I did not dare to look for my picture anywhere but in the worst and highest positions—not venturing to hope

for anything better, and Monsieur Thomas apparently agreed with me.

All of a sudden he gave an exclamation of surprise and delight—for there was his portrait not only on the line but in the very centre of a room also. It could not possibly have been placed in a better position.

Turning to me he gripped me by the arm with his strong hand and said, " Mon cher Julius, je te fais mes sincères compliments, tu as bien merité d'être si bien placé," and I fancied I noticed a tremor in his honest voice. From that moment I remember everything appeared to me as though through a rose-coloured mist. It was the happiest day in my life. Then full of kindly feelings towards the world in general, we made a tour of the galleries. By the time we had done this the smart people were beginning to arrive, and the rooms getting crowded; there was a frou-frou of silk and the odour of perfume. On all sides one heard the buzz of voices, friends greeting each other with congratulations. " Mais il est épatant ton tableau, mon vieux," and so forth; the air positively reeked with compliments. Everyone seemed pleased to see everyone else. There was an atmosphere of gaiety such as I had never been in before, I thought—but that was of course because I was on the line, and so happy. And then we went and had another look at my picture and met Monsieur Yvon close by, and he told Monsieur Thomas that



MY FIRST EXHIBITED PICTURE. PORTRAIT OF MONSIEUR I. THOMAS.
PARIS SALON, 1881.

it was "étonnant comme resemblance et d'un grand merite."

It was now about time to think of déjeuner, also an important affair on this occasion. Monsieur Thomas had read that everyone went to Ledoyens, so there, as he put it, we must go—"il n'y avait pas à hesiter—il faut être dans le mouvement"—and as our tickets would readmit us after lunch, to Ledoyens we went. Ledoyens has not changed architecturally since those days, but it has had to bear the brunt of competition, and is no longer considered the fashionable place it then was. At the time of which I am writing it was quite the smartest restaurant on the Champs Élysées, and so crowded a l'heure du déjeuner on the Vernissage that it was difficult to find a table as a rule.

Monsieur Thomas was, as I have said, a man of magnificent presence, and somehow always impressed mâitres d'hôtel—so in spite of the crowd and "not a table to be had," we were soon comfortably seated where we could see everyone. "Truite saumonée sauce verte, du canneton aux petits pois des asperges a l'huile, des fraises, avec une bonne bouteille de Graves, ça te va t'il, mon vieux Julius?" he asked after consultation with the obsequious head-waiter. What could one desire better? And whilst doing justice to all these good things, we gazed on the wonderful crowd around us and wondered who they all were, and Monsieur Thomas fancied he recognised such

or such a celebrity, and pointed him or her out to me—and probably was wrong; but I didn't know, so it didn't matter, and we both agreed that all the prettiest women in Paris must be there.

After our coffee and a cigarette, we returned to the Salon, where it was then the fashion to spend an hour or so in the Sculpture Hall after lunch to look, not at the statues, but at the famous people present, and the latest fashions as displayed by the smartly dressed women on all sides. It was indeed a wonderful scene to my youthful eyes. When we left at about four o'clock Monsieur Thomas remarked that it was too late for him to return to his bureau, so that we might as well make a day of it whilst we were about it. So he hailed a fiacre and we drove to the Bois and had a bock at the Cascade, where it was delightfully cool after the stuffy atmosphere of the Salon. We then returned to the Rue de Reuilly and dined out in the garden, and he recounted my success and all we had been doing since the morning; and Madame Thomas told me she felt as pleased as if I were her own son.

When I got back to my little room in the Rue de la Rochefoucauld I felt as though I had passed a day in fairyland, and wished it could all happen over again.

CHAPTER XII

I move to the Rue Fontaine St Georges—I am commissioned to paint the portrait of Madame Thomas—Buying more furniture—A house-warming—Amusing jeu d'esprit—I take a studio with a friend—The Passage Lathuille—A bad neighbourhood—Low rental—Studio furniture—Lady visitors—Impromptu lunches—The amateur model—An amusing experience—Attractive personality of the average female model—"Wrong uns"—Earnings of models—Faux ménages—Long "collages"—Cat-and-dog existence—Middle-aged ex-models—The morals of the ancienne cocotte—How a collage usually commences—An artistic anecdote—Coolness of Frenchmen nowadays—An incident in a café—Mon amie in the Rue Frochot—Laughable incident—A lapse of memory.

I HAD now been at the Rue de la Rochefoucauld about a year when a friend who had a small appartement de garcon in the Rue Fontaine St Georges just round the corner asked me if I would take it off his hands. It was so much more convenient in every way than my one room, and, above all, so cheap that I jumped at the chance of having a real apartment all to myself. It would seem like getting on, anyway, I said to myself, as an excuse for my extravagance. So I took it and moved in.

Monsieur Thomas, to still further encourage me,

commissioned me to paint Madame's portrait as a pendant to his own, so I felt quite arrivé. Up till then I had had very little in the way of furniture of my own, so this commande was more particularly acceptable as it enabled me to increase my meagre stock of household goods and chattels. There were lots of marchands de bibelots round about the Boulevard de Clichy, where I managed to pick up quite a lot of artistic odds and ends; so my rooms looked quite well filled when I had finished. And as I was only paying four pounds a year more rent I had reason to feel satisfied with my bargain. I gave a sort of house-warming, I remember—and found when my friends turned up I was short of glasses, so had to borrow some from the concierge.

Not having sufficient chairs didn't so much matter, as one could always sit on the floor. Mentioning chairs reminds me of a very amusing jeu d'esprit. I had got to know une dame mariée just about the time I moved into the Rue Fontaine, and after a lot of persuasion she agreed to come and fetch me one evening at my rooms instead of meeting me at the corner of the street. At lunch that day I casually asked an artist friend—who was always looked upon as a Don Juan, so many adventures was he supposed to have on hand—what he would advise me to do with her, since she really was a married woman; meaning, of course, whether to take her to a café concert

or to dinner or to supper. It was doubtless a stupid thing to ask him at all, but I wanted also to let him see that he was not the only lady-killer in Montmartre. He leaned on the table, and stroking his moustache reflectively, replied after a pause, "Is it the first time this belle dame is visiting you?"

"Yes, of course," I replied unguardedly.

"Then in that case," he rejoined gravely, "I should advise you before she arrives to put something on every chair—books, hats, anything."

"What on earth for?" I exclaimed.

"Parce que alors mon cher elle sera forcée de s'asseoir sur le lit."

I stared at him for a moment, and then it dawned on me that either he was pulling my leg, or had misconstrued my query.

Not long after I had settled down in the Rue Fontaine a friend suggested my sharing with him a studio he felt like taking close to the Place Clichy. From what he told me it struck me as being a bargain, and as I wanted some place where I could paint a picture for the following year, I said I would go with him to see it and think it over. It was situated in a narrow, tortuous-like alley leading from the Boulevard to the Avenue de Clichy—named the Passage Lathuille, and was one of the queerest places imaginable. Though leading directly from two very busy thoroughfares, it was as ill-paved and as quiet as a street in a small

provincial town; at night so badly lighted and so deserted as to suggest the possibility of any crime being committed in its dark purlieus with comparative impunity. Short cut though it is, I fancy that even nowadays most people would prefer to avoid it late at night, for the neighbourhood has an unsavoury reputation.

So far as the cheapness of the atelier in question was concerned, there was nothing to be said against it, for it was only fifteen pounds a year. One couldn't well expect a studio for less—but there was nothing attractive about it, and the neighbourhood was particularly squalid. Still it was an atelier and it had been built as such. It was on the ground floor of a very old house and the door opened on to the courtyard; there was only the studio and a small lumber closet which could be used as a cabinet de toilette. Well, I decided to share it with him, so we took it at once. He had a lot of odds and ends in the way of furniture, bits of tapestry, old chairs, and cupboards, and such like. I bought some studio rubbish such as pewter plates, a few old casts, an easel, and so forth, and these, with heaps of canvases we had, made the place look really quite cheerful. I am sure that we both felt that it was now only a question of time and then we should be moving to the Boulevard itself.

He was a painter of "Nature morte," and I aimed at portraiture, so our work did not clash. We got

MODELS.

on very well together, as our temperaments and tastes were very similar, and we were both ardent admirers at the shrine of feminine beauty.

Now the studio, small and unpretentious as it was, had been occupied before we took it by a painter who was very fond of the fair sex, or else was constantly employing models—judging from the number of good-looking girls who called during the first few weeks to ask after him. As we didn't know him, and he had not left any address, of course the very least we could do, as gallant young men, was to invite them in, and do our best to console them for his departure—usually not an over-difficult task. Many a delightful impromptu déjeuner did we thus owe to the popularity of our predecessor. There was a very good charcutier in the avenue close by, where the galantine was excellent; also an epicier, who sold a wonderful vin blanc at fifty cents le litre (bottle included). We managed, therefore, to get a good deal of fun as well as work, one way and another, out of the studio—and the great charm of it was that it was generally à l'improviste. One could never tell when something amusing might turn up.

I remember one instance in particular, which will bear recounting, as it was the only experience of the kind I ever had whilst in Paris. My friend was away in the country staying with his people, and I was pottering about alone in the studio one afternoon. It was not an over-cheerful place when

one had it all to oneself, as there was no look-out whatever—and I was pondering whether I would go round to the café and have my aperitif when there came a timid knock at the door. "Entrez," I called out, only too glad of a visitor. There was a moment's pause—then the door opened and a young woman entered. From her diffident manner I saw at once she was not a model, or a friend of our predecessor. She might have been a girl from a small shop judging from her very plain and homely attire.

"Que voulez-vous, Mademoiselle?" I asked, noting her evident embarrassment.

With much hesitation she then to my surprise explained that she wanted to become a model.

"A model for what?" I replied thoughtlessly—for she had no pretension whatever to beauty; in fact, she was a very plain and commonplace-looking girl.

"I've been told I've got a good figure, Monsieur," she nervously answered, and then she continued with sudden volubility that she came from Amiens, was only nineteen, had been employed as a bonne up till now, but that she didn't like the work, and didn't want to go back to the country again; and someone had told her she could earn quite a lot of money as a model—and that's why she had knocked at my door. The concierge had told her I used models.

I was for a moment sorry for the stupid girl,

as I could see at a glance that she was no earthly good as a figure model. Someone had evidently been poking fun at her—and I was about to tell her that I was not in want of anyone for the moment, when a devilish idea of a joke flashed through my mind.

"Well, Mademoiselle," I said, after a pause, "of course I cannot give you sittings without seeing your figure first; it's impossible to judge what it's like with all your clothes on. Please undress and let's have a look at it."

"Oh, Monsieur," she replied with renewed embarrassment, "I have never done so before—I don't like to."

"Well, do as you please," I replied, "but if you want to become a model you must not have any false modesty. However, don't worry about it to-day; come and see me again some other time."

She was on the point of going and had her hand on the door when she suddenly appeared to make up her mind, and, coming back, she blurted out, "I'll show it you now, since I'm here—but where shall I undress; not here in the studio before you."

"Oh you can manage in there, no doubt," said I nonchalantly, indicating the lumber closet.

She went in and was an unconscionable time, I thought, so I called out, "Please come along when you're ready—don't be shy. I'm not going to eat you."

With a sort of nervous giggle, she then appeared in a long white shift of some coarse material such as I imagine peasants wear, and stood irresolute before me where I sat at my easel.

"Allons," I said in a friendly tone to encourage her, for she was trembling painfully, "you'll have to take that off also."

With much hesitation she let it fall off one shoulder, then off the other, till at last, as if with a great effort, she let it drop and stood before me in puris naturalibus. A glance was sufficient to confirm what I had surmised, that she would not be the slightest use as a model. Had it not been for the tale she had pitched me and the fuss she had made about undressing, I should not have looked at her twice. However, for form's sake, I told her to take a pose or two, which she did with about as much grace and elegance as a young elephant. Then I said, "Thank you, you can put on your things again."

She did not require to be told twice; she made a snatch at her garment and rushed back into the lumber-room. She was far quicker dressing than undressing, and soon reappeared, looking very hot and untidy—but she had quite recovered her composure.

"Will I do for you, Monsieur?" she asked with a flippant smile as she fixed on her hat.

Her manner irritated me. She was no longer the

"STOOD IRRESOLUTE BEFORE ME WHERE I SAT AT MY EASEL."

demure little person that had entered the studio a few minutes previously. I simply could not resist the temptation to carry out my joke.

"Well," I replied gravely, "if Mademoiselle will leave her address with me I will give it to my master on his return."

She stood as if transfixed. "Your master on his return," she repeated. "What! aren't you the artist?"

"No, I'm only his valet," I replied; "but that doesn't matter. I will make a report on your beautiful figure to him."

"Oh, you wretch," she exclaimed with rage; "and to think that I undressed before you."

She was about to create a scene and start abusing me when at this moment there was a knock at the studio door. Who could it be?

"Attendez ici un instant," I said to the girl. "Voilà du monde qui arrive."

Going out I found a friend of mine, not an artist —as a matter of fact he was on the Bourse.

"I hope I am not disturbing you," he said with a significant laugh, for he evidently had heard the girl's voice.

A positive inspiration came to me; so, in a few words, I hastily told him what had happened, and asked if he would like to have a good joke, and follow it up by pretending he was my master.

He entered into the spirit of the idea at once. "All right," he said, "I'll do it, and I bet I'll get

her to show me her figure also, if you give me time."

So I arranged that I would go and wait for him at the café at the corner for half an hour. It was nearer an hour and a half before he turned up. He looked somewhat dishevelled.

"I'm simply bursting for a drink," he said. "What a hot afternoon, and such an adventure, mon vieux." Then seeing that I expected some details, he added, "Mais elle n'était pas si mal que cela cette jeune fille." He wouldn't tell me any more, and I never saw her again.

As a rule I found the average model—I refer to the female ones—a very sympathetic and attractive personality, who actually took an intelligent interest in your work if she liked you. There are, of course, "wrong uns," as one would find in any calling—women who were simply nothing more or less than "des grues"—who would be found in the low cafés and brasseries on the Boulevard's exterieurs, who exercised two professions, one by day and the other by night. Of these I have nothing to say—but the modèle serieux, if she had any pretension to good-looks or beauté du corps, could always find work if she stuck to it, and could easily earn her three hundred francs a month.

Unfortunately—if one can put it so—the atmosphere of France seems to lend itself to romance and the entente, or sympathy, or what one will, which so often exists between artist and model,

"A VERY SYMPATHETIC AND ATTRACTIVE PERSONALITY."

frequently in Paris takes a serious and lasting form. A slight penchant or a dog-in-the-manger desire to keep her entirely to himself ends eventually by his persuading her to become his mistress et de se mettre en ménage ensemble.

In the cafés mostly frequented by artists round Montmartre—the Café de la Rochefoucauld, of course, excepted—one saw many of these faux ménages, happy enough no doubt so long as the woman retained her good-looks, but afterwards often developing into a cat-and-dog existence as her middle age approached. To me these "collages" always appeared pathetic; it seemed such a pity that a man beyond the prime of life, and with a reputation, should live in this ambiguous and undignified fashion; when arrived at an age when his position almost demanded a certain pose, he should be under the thumb of a woman whom he had rescued perhaps from the streets, and who had never anything but her looks to recommend her when young—for these middle-aged passée ex-model maîtresses become more and more exigeante as time goes on.

In some cases, artists I knew—men of standing—had married their maîtresses, and this, with scarcely an exception, turned out disastrously for the man. It was merely exchanging one's fetters of one's own free will without the slightest material advantage—except for the woman. It may be replied that the women had given up the best years of their

lives while living with these men. Soit! but it was generally done with their eyes wide open; they knew their men, and it was usually with but one object in view—a certain aisance, or perhaps marriage, in their middle age. Moreover, it was, as far as I could see, only when they got passées that they were really faithful to their amants, and that their virtue became unassailable. Never was there truer an axiom than :" Il n'y a pas de vertue plus sévère que celle de l'ancienne cocotte." When still endowed with youth and beauty they seldom had any compunction en faisant des petites queues, when the opportunity presented itself, as it often would.

Although in all these sordid affairs one was constantly being reminded of La Rochefoucauld's aphorism that " Everything is reducible to the motive of self-interest " it often appeared to me that conceit on the part of the man was the initial cause of many of these miserable collages. A middle-aged man by some accident came across an exceptionally good-looking girl; whether he picked her up in the street or was introduced didn't matter. She took a fancy to him. All his friends must immediately know of—well, say—his good-fortune. " Une beauté mon cher je te la ferai voir," he would tell them confidentially. Then he would bring her to his café. If she really was something quite out of the common, his pals, middle-aged men like himself, would leer at her,

pay her compliments which would turn her silly head; they would tell him she was "ravissante mon cher—quel chançard que tu es," and the mischief was done. His vanity was tickled, and if his means allowed it, he would henceforth make her his maîtresse—and then she would be his alone, as the poor fool would imagine. After which, if the collage continued long enough, it would develop gradually into another of these faux ménages I have described—which must not, of course, be confounded with the charming little "liaisons" amongst students and petites ouvrières in the Quartier Latin. These collages were, as far as I could judge, generally confined to the artists, sculptors, and musicians who lived in the district—doubtless owing to the Bohemian existence attaching to their professions.

Talking of models, there was a story told of an artist who had just moved into a studio on the Avenue de Villiers. Every morning he used to take a constitutional, and on several occasions he had met a very beautiful woman, who apparently lived a few doors away from him. He was so struck with her that he used to make a point of always going for his stroll at the same hour on the chance of meeting her, although she had not given him the slightest indication of desiring to make his acquaintance. This went on for some days, till at last she gave him a glance, the meaning of which was unmistakable, so the next morning he

purchased a large bouquet of flowers, and waited. She came out as usual, and as she did so, he went up to her, and raising his hat, he asked her acceptance of the flowers—at the same time telling her how long he had admired her from a distance, and how much he would like to paint her; and ended by asking her if she would come and sit for him. She said nothing in reply to all this, but when he had finished she went back into her doorway and blew a small whistle she carried on a chain. A manservant appeared. "Jean," she said, "put Monsieur's name on my list."

We hear a great deal nowadays of Frenchmen having lost a lot of their old excitability. Even in those far-off days of which I write I found that on occasions the Parisian, as well as the Parisienne, could under provocation be cool enough to make me feel very hot. One instance in particular comes to my mind. I found myself one night in an enterprising mood seated at a café next to a very charming little lady who was in the company of a middle-aged man. In the conceit of my youth I magnified to myself what was probably but a very casual glance into a desire on her part to love me for myself alone. To tear a leaf out of my sketch-book and scrawl a hurried line thereon was the work of but a moment. Another moment and I had managed to let her see it, and pushed it along the seat into her hand. Swifter still the dénouement! To my horror, I saw my billet-

doux handed to her attendant cavalier, who read it as calmly as if it had been the wine list, and then tearing it carefully into four pieces, handed it back to me in full view of the whole café—with an exaggerated gesture of politeness, more withering than the most studied verbal insult. I had asked for it and got it, and there being no reply possible, I suddenly remembered an important appointment outside. It is many years ago, but I tingle all over when I recall my very poor attempt at a dignified exit.

At about this time a very good-looking lady who was living in the Rue Frochot under the protection of a wealthy but aged gentleman honoured me with her affection—and would often come and sit for me when I wanted a model, and in return for this kindness on her part, when she sent round word to me to say she felt lonely as her guardian was away, I would go round and do my best to cheer her up of an evening for a few hours. And as I was young and full of spirits I generally succeeded. She had a nice apartment on the ground floor with windows on the street, a very quiet one, and I was pretty agile in those days, so there was no need to ring the house bell when the hall door was closed at night, which was very fortunate, as in her residence, like in many others in the eccentric quarters of Paris, if one was not known one had to call out to the concierge the name of the person you were visiting, if it was after dark.

By the way, this peculiar custom was the cause of a most irritating, though laughable incident that happened to me late one night not far from where I lived. A beauteous dame had invited me to call on her, but as she had an engagement for supper she asked me to defer my visit till her return in the early hours of the morning—not an unusual time for a call in Montmartre. So I went to keep the appointment—rang the bell—the door opened, and as it was pitch dark inside I lit a match and started groping my way upstairs, for she had told me her apartment was situated on the fourth floor. I had scarcely gone a dozen steps when the concierge came out of his room holding a lamp. "Who's that?" he called out.

"Someone for the lady on the fourth floor," I replied.

"What's the name of the lady you are going to see, Monsieur?" he called out again.

At that moment my memory played me a trick it has occasionally served me since, but never under such awkward circumstances. For the life of me I could not recollect her name. I tried all I could to remember it quickly, as there was no time to spare—but to no effect. The concierge hurried up to where I was standing.

"Who are you going to visit?" he repeated roughly this time—and holding up the lamp to see me better.

I thought it perhaps best to treat it as a joke.

"To tell you the truth," I said, with a sickly attempt at a laugh, "I've clean forgotten her name."

"Oh, that's it, is it," he exclaimed; "then if you don't know who you want to see you must come down again and get out quick."

I saw it was useless arguing with him, as he might have called for the police and created a scene, so down I returned very sheepishly.

"I am sorry you don't believe me, but I will return to-morrow and prove to you what I say is true," I said as I went out. For all reply he slammed the door in my face.

I went and sat in a café and racked my memory, hoping her name would come back to me so that I could write and explain—but it was no use. I never remembered it again. A few days later we met by accident, and I was on the point of speaking to her, but she gave me a look that froze me up. I had a good deal of nerve, but after that I did not dare to go up to her and say the reason I had not kept the appointment was because I had forgotten her name.

CHAPTER XIII

The Bal des Quatz Arts—Difficulty of obtaining ticket—My costume—Rendezvous at café—Indelicate costumes of ladies—Starting for the Élysée Montmartre—Sergents de ville guarding entrance—Stringent precautions—Impressions of ballroom scene—Gorgeous costumes of men—Distinguished painters—Nude girls—Blatant indecency of diaphanous evening dresses—Extraordinary spectacle—Wild dancing and deafening music—I meet a little model—Her costume—Processions of different ateliers—Wonderful effects—Supper served—The danse du ventre on one of the tables—No drunkenness a feature of the ball—Procession of students to Quartier Latin in morning—Arrest of a nude girl in street—True hospitality.

THE Bal des Quatz Arts was at that time, as it is now, one of the great events of the year amongst the ateliers of Paris. It is the Annual Carnival given by the Art students, and preparations for it are begun long before the date on which it is held. I had heard such a lot about it that I was looking forward to the evening with the excitement of a débutante going to her first dance—and the more especially as all my friends would be there, and a lot of pretty women we knew. My idea, however, of what the ball would be like was based somewhat on the descriptions I had read of the Bals

Costumés at the Opera House (where high-born, wealthy ladies go in masks and dominoes in search of intrigues with handsome but penniless artists). I imagined a huge crowd of people fantastically garbed, such as one would expect to see at any big fancy-dress ball in England, but with all the added verve and colour and gaiety which the French Art student would naturally impart. It would of course be a very beautiful and artistic scene, and many of the famous artists would doubtless bring their wives and daughters to witness it My conception was rather wide of the mark—as will be gathered.

Had I not seen for myself the Bal des Quatz Arts, I should never have believed that in modern times and in a great city such " revelry " would be possible, even in the name of Art. In my day the ball was held in the Élysée Montmartre, which for that night was closed to the public and given up entirely to the artists. To obtain a ticket, if you were entitled to it as an artist, or by reason of belonging to one of the big ateliers, was not a difficult matter, and the cost, including supper, as I will state later, infinitesimal; but to anyone not so accredited it was more difficult to get in, so it used to be said, than to be invited to an official ball at the real Élysée. Millionaire Americans have been known to offer untold wealth for one of the coveted pasteboards, but to no effect. " We don't want rich men and we don't want their money; this

is quite a private affair and we intend to keep it amongst our own set," was the usual reply.

That, however, it was not a private affair or confined only to students and artists will be seen; and to my certain knowledge many outsiders did manage to get tickets, if they were in the swim. As a bal d'étudiants, it was not precisely a small gathering though, as the number present usually ran well into four figures. Whilst every precaution was, however, taken to prevent tickets being sold to men who had no claim to being in the profession, there were no obstacles placed in the way of the fair sex obtaining admission either accompanied or alone, with the result that every pretty actress and every model, and also many well-known demi-mondaines would be present.

I will endeavour to describe my impressions of the extraordinary scene as it appeared to me on the first occasion I went to one of these " balls," but I fear that even now, after the lapse of so many years, my stock of adjectives will be insufficient to depict in mere words the gorgeous spectacle and the galaxy of female beauty I saw around me.

The never-to-be-forgotten evening started a couple of hours before the ball opened—as a whole party of us arranged to meet for an early supper at a café close by. It was a stringent rule of the ball committee that everyone had to wear fancy dress of some description, and no mere faking up

of an old dress suit or eccentric everyday attire was admissible. I had decided, after much reflection, that an Arab costume with burnous and turban would best suit my particular type of beauty, so in that I arrayed myself—staining my face and hands brown to give a sunburnt appearance, for I was nothing if not artistic in those days.

On arriving at the café I found quite a little crowd assembled in a private room on the first floor. All my friends were there, and with them their petites amies and others—and I had my first impression of what the ball was going to be like. I shall never forget it. The men were in more or less fantastic garb, such as one would have expected to see, but what at once riveted my attention was the attire of the ladies. Most of them were décolletées, if one could call it décolletée when their bosoms were completely exposed, and several had costumes on of so transparent a material as to scarcely leave anything to the imagination; one could not imagine anything more suggestive. I must admit I fairly gasped when I looked around me—for we were crowded into a room of quite moderate size. No one, however, seemed to take any notice of all this indecency, so I regained my composure and shook hands all round as calmly as though it had been a reception and it was quite usual for the ladies to be so slightly attired. I must confess, though, that there were one or two very pretty women

present I had long admired at a distance—habillées bien entendu—and it was not altogether unpleasant to regale one's eyes on the vision of their now revealed charms, and I did not stint myself either.

Well, after a lot of badinage and having something to eat, for supper would not be served at the ball till the early hours of the morning, it was at last time to go to the Élysée as there was no admittance after a certain hour. The ladies donned long cloaks to hide their nudity from the public gaze, and we all started. Outside the café the Boulevard was packed with people anxious to get a glimpse of the deshabille of the ladies; and as it was a fine warm spring evening they were frequently rewarded for their patience—as here and there a pair of dainty bare legs or a snowy neck and shoulders passed through. Whilst occasionally some particularly original costume would draw cheers or caustic remarks from the crowd, which was very good-humoured, and evidently quite prepared for all this artistic eccentricity.

The actual entrance to the building was barred by a double row of sergents de ville, so no one not in costume could approach too closely; and at the door was a group of officials who would not admit anyone without his or her ticket being produced. And this was not all—for again, and before one could penetrate into the actual interior, one's ticket had to be submitted to the scrutiny of yet

"AS HERE AND THERE A PAIR OF BARE LEGS OR A SNOWY NECK AND SHOULDERS PASSED THROUGH."

another line of officials who examined them closely, probably for fear of any imitation ones being passed; and then tearing off a corner, which they retained, you were at length allowed to pass in. All this of course took time and was rather trying to one's patience, but it was all taken good-naturedly, for everyone was in the gayest spirits.

At last I found myself in the big dancing hall, and the scene I had before me was certainly the most extraordinary that could be imagined. I had formed, as I have said, some idea in my mind as to what a French costume ball would be like, but never could I have conjured up such a vision, such a kaleidoscope of colour and animation as met my eyes. Dancing was not in progress for the moment, and the floor was crowded with every conceivable costume of the world, ancient and modern, from the Stone Age to the Revolution of '48; the men's costumes being especially magnificent, and in many instances, I noted at once, were carried out with a regard for detail which was a sure indication of the artist.

There was an entire absence of the ordinary costumier's costumes hired out for the evening one always sees at fancy-dress balls. Military uniforms, and the garb of bygone ages, were worn by men who had evidently made a study of the particular period; so the effect was that of a reproduction of a fine picture. Distinguished painters I knew by sight, were actually in costumes

representing their own masterpieces—all that, however, was to me the least interesting portion of the immense concourse.

The costumes, or rather what there was of them, of the fair sex must needs be described; and how to find words baffles me. I was somewhat prepared from what I had already seen at the café for décolletée corsages and scanty attire, but all that was quite eclipsed by what I now saw—for numbers of the girls were, with the exception of a pair of slippers, in a state of absolute nudity, and walking about among the crowd shaking hands here and there with friends as unconcernedly as though there was nothing incongruous in their appearance. Of course most of them were models and several had exquisite figures, so the effect when one got over the first shock of surprise was delightful—for it may be mentioned that only those with perfect shapes were to be seen thus unattired. They knew that no costume they could afford could be more beautiful than their own natural loveliness.

When I had got over my bewilderment a little, I managed to look round at those who were wearing some sort of costume, only to find that the prevailing note, however beautiful the conception, was generally indelicacy in some form or other; not coarse blatant indecency, but of a distinctly original kind. Still it was amazing. Lovely women could be seen walking round on the arm

of perhaps some magnificent Napoleonic cavalryman; at first sight they would appear to be wearing ordinary black evening dress, extremely décolletée of course—but as they approached you noticed that the skirt consisted of only one thickness of tulle or lace or whatever material it might be to match the bodice, and that they had nothing whatever on underneath—not even pantalons. So that every part of their form from the waist downwards was completely visible through the transparency of the skirt.

For unabashed indecency I have never seen anything since to equal those diaphanous evening dresses; they were chefs-d'œuvre of immodesty—the nude women were quite commonplace in comparison. After a time many of these ladies would find their skirts incommoded them for dancing, and would pick them up and hold them over their arms in the usual manner of an ordinary ballroom —with a result that can be better imagined than described. One would not have been the least surprised at such "costumes" and abandon had one been at a fête in a brothel, but they came as a bit of a shock at a ball given by Art students. The music was of a deafening character, but calculated to encourage wild dancing; and it did, to say the least of it.

Absorbed in my contemplation of the extraordinary scene, I had missed my friends and was quite alone when suddenly I heard a female voice

say to me, "A quoi révons nous, Monsieur l'Anglais," and turning round to see who it was had recognised me through my disguise, I saw a little model I knew slightly, through meeting her in the Quartier—although I had hardly spoken a dozen words to her. I had always thought she was rather a pretty girl, but as I now saw her she was one of the most charming and piquant figures imaginable. She might have been one of Grevin's sketches come to life. For costume she had on a large square piece of white satin with letters painted on it to give you the idea that it was a "Petit Journal," with a hole torn in it for her pretty head to pass through. This and a pair of white shoes completed her attire. The slightest movement displayed her nude form, as the satin was only the width of the small newspaper in question. It was delightfully original, and many men crowded round to admire it, as she had only just arrived.

"Vous êtes donc tout seul?" she asked after I had complimented her on her costume, which she told me she had designed herself.

I explained how I had somehow missed the friends I had come with, then:

"Donnez-moi votre bras et faisons un tour," she said with the easy familiarity of Bohemia.

I was only too pleased—for it was somewhat tiring standing about alone. So through the crowd we went together; she clinging to my arm

"THOSE DIAPHANOUS EVENING DRESSES."

as though we were old friends. I soon discovered that she was quite a typical little Parisienne of her class, and full of fun and intelligence, so I felt it was a bit of luck to have met her—as in fact it turned out. We were walking round when I came across one of the men of my party.

"Tiens vous voilà déjà collé," he remarked chaffingly, noticing how she was hanging on my arm.

"Pour cette nuit au moins," she replied in the same vein as we passed on.

As the night went on various interesting proceedings took place. There were processions through the hall of the different ateliers—each group representing the work of the maître. Some were mediaeval, others prehistoric, others Egyptian, and so forth—most magnificently and realistically arranged and costumed, or rather uncostumed; whilst for stage management they could not have been surpassed—and all went off without a hitch. In one especially where a wagon drawn by two huge oxen passed through the hall there was no difficulty whatever with the unwieldy brutes, and vehicle, horses, donkeys, and dogs also took part with wonderful effect.

But even in these processions the nude was ever present, and no opportunity missed of displaying some beautiful female form. The compositions were always chosen with that in view—evidently. I remember two groups that impressed me particu-

larly—one a sort of scene of the Inquisition, a lovely nude woman on the rack surrounded by hooded figures—the ivory white of her flesh against the sombre hues of the men's dress standing out in startling relief. The other was Egyptian—a magnificent woman, entirely nude of course, reclining on rich silk cushions on a sort of dais under a canopy, carried on bamboo poles by Ethiopians, and preceded by a group of nude slaves dancing and beating cymbals. It was a dream of the days of Cleopatra, and could not have been better staged anywhere.

In one corner of the hall one of the ateliers had erected a big booth representing an Eastern slave market. The slave-dealer, dressed in tiger skins and carrying a heavy whip, paraded his wares in the shape of a dozen beautiful young girls entirely nude, and it was open to anyone to do a deal if they wanted a slave. It was very realistic and very tempting, and no doubt many men present would have liked to buy one or two.

And so the night wore on, and one gradually got so satiated with the female form divine that at last one took scarcely any further notice of it. About three o'clock there was a big movement and a crowd of workmen appeared, bearing trestles and boards, and in a very short time long tables were put up all over the hall; then white-aproned waiters came in with tablecloths, napkins, knives, and forks, and plates and glasses—and then with

baskets containing bread, and cold meats, poultry, bottles of wine, and everything for a simple though ample cold collation. Then with much shouting the various ateliers sorted themselves out and sat down at their respective tables.

I had invited my little friend the model to have supper with me; so I had no difficulty in getting a seat as she looked after all that, and we were soon merrily fixed up. As may be imagined, one did ample justice to the homely fare. Towards the end of the banquet there was a certain amount of good-humoured boisterous behaviour; but it was all very amusing from an artistic point of view, although it might have shocked a prude, especially when a nude young lady got up on one of the tables and gave us a danse du ventre most realistically, as may be imagined.

But the night was long past—and one could note the daylight through the windows. Many little affectionate episodes, not usually enacted in public, could be witnessed around the tables as the hour for parting or otherwise approached. Lovely forms reclining on manly Roman chests—dainty Eastern princesses clinging to brawny Greek athletes—all combined to make up a picture of ribaldry which brought, I remember, to my mind the history of ancient Alexandria, and the stories one has read of the degenerate days of the Roman Empire, for it could not have been more debauched even in those times.

Yet amongst all this crowd of revellers I did not see one single instance of drunkenness, and that was, I recollect, what struck me as being one of the most remarkable features of the ball. Had it been otherwise all its picturesque interest would have ceased to exist, and it would have been nothing but a licentious orgy.

It had been broad daylight for some hours when it was over, and the crowd of tired and dishevelled revellers began to disperse; but it was not finished yet. A procession of students and their lady friends who lived in the Quartier Latin formed up outside the Élysée, and to the accompaniment of a stirring chorus started on their homeward journey. The streets were already crowded with ouvriers on their way to their work, but the strange cortège did not seem to astonish them. They were used to such artistic vagaries, even to the spectacle of women in deshabille in the street, and in broad daylight. I learned afterwards that a girl-model in a state of absolute nudity was arrested at six o'clock that morning in the Rue Bonaparte!

My newly found amie and I were however too tired after the night's excitement to take much further interest in the proceedings. She told me that she lived in the Avenue Trudaine, which was quite close by; so we walked across together, she the while clinging quite affectionately to my arm. We must have looked a curiously assorted couple.

On reaching her door, I was on the point of leaving her when she said hospitably:

"Tu as ête très-gentil—you can come up if you like."

I hesitated, but only because of my Arab costume; then with ready perception she added—"Tu enverras ma femme de ménage chercher tes vêtements dans la journée." So I went up.

CHAPTER XIV

Visit to the district of Fontainebleau—Marlotte—The village—The open-air painters—The village inn—The panels in the salle à manger—Painting everywhere—The forest—The main street—Food at the hotel—The petit vin—The table d'hôte—The people one met—Cheery crowd—Billiards—"Le jeu au bouchon"—O de Penne celebrated painter of sporting pictures—His maîtresse—Their marriage—His house and bedroom—Ciceri, the landscape painter—His knowledge of women—"Her old man's day"—The daily routine in Marlotte—A new arrival—A radiant vision—The chic Parisienne—A new acquaintance—L'Inconnue—The commencement of a love story—Delightful days—A shock—The end of the romance.

My success at the Salon had aroused in me an enthusiastic desire to "go one better" the following year. I was perhaps a trifle over-ambitious, but that was more satisfactory than being downhearted; it was, at any rate, a prerogative of youth to be buoyed up with hopes which, alas, were too often destined not to be realised.

The weather was splendid; in those days, as far as I can recollect, it was always summer weather during the summer months—not like now. But I mustn't start grumbling about the weather; it's doubtless I who have changed, not

it. Well, to get on with my narrative, I decided to have an attempt at something sérieux en plein air. My excursions with Stott in the neighbourhood of Paris had given me a predilection for this style of work, so I thought I would go and see Fontainebleau and the country around.

On mentioning my intention to some friends at the Rochefoucauld I found that one of them, a very distinguished painter of animal subjects, Monsieur O. de Penne, lived quite near to the forest, in a little village named Marlotte. He so extolled the beauty of the district and the simple life one lived there—and offered me, moreover, so genial a welcome at his place if I came down, that I decided one day to pack up my traps and go down and have a look round. Of course I took my sketching easel, paint-box, and some canvases with me, as in those days of enthusiasm one never went anywhere without one's working materials. Marlotte in those days was a very quaint little village, typically French, with practically only a single street. It was but a short distance from the railway station at Montigny—half a kilometre or thereabouts—so one put one's luggage in a cart and walked alongside.

My first impressions on arriving were that the whole place existed only for artists. One seemed to see them everywhere; as an American quaintly put it: "You couldn't expectorate without hitting one." Either painting or strolling about in the

weirdest of garbs, they were ubiquitous. There was no mistaking them—no one could have taken these unkempt individuals for anything but artists. Accustomed as I was to the eccentricity of attire of students at the École, I was nevertheless amused at the grotesque appearance of many of these open-air painters. Whether this eccentricity was merely "pose" or part of the stock-in-trade of a landscape artist I was never able to really decide; but it struck me, I remember, as a curious fact that personal cleanliness, not to mention smartness of appearance, were not evidently considered as necessary attributes for a French painter when working in the country. Perhaps they found they could commune more easily with nature if unwashed. I am of course talking of many years ago; perhaps it is different nowadays. Still, very many of the worst-looking specimens were fine artists, so it didn't do to judge by appearances.

There was only one inn at Marlotte at the time; it was, however, quite worth a visit to Marlotte to spend a day or two in it even if one had not been a painter, for it was as quaint and ramshackle a place as could well be imagined, and almost picturesque in its way. Originally the "village pub," it had gradually—with the increasing clientèle of artists—become quite an important hostelry for so small a hamlet; and the raison d'être of this growth was visible all over it. It existed only for and by artists, so the whole build-

"EITHER PAINTING OR STROLLING ABOUT IN THE WEIRDEST OF GARBS."

ing reflected this—primitive and cheaply constructed though it was. The salle à manger walls were fitted with movable panels of various sizes, to encourage the locataires to present specimens of their work to the proprietor; with the result that there was quite a collection of Works of Art of more or less merit adorning the room—several indeed by men who have since achieved fame. The effect was certainly very original, and compensated for its otherwise rough and unfinished appearance. Paint-boxes, easels, canvases, and other Art paraphernalia littered the place, so this "hotel" was practically a sort of lumber-room of the great atelier outside—the forest of Fontainebleau; for there was nothing else to do at the place but paint.

It did not take long to fall into the habits and customs of the place, which consisted chiefly in discarding at once one's collar and the getting into one's oldest clothes—then with sketch-box slung over shoulder and pipe in mouth one started off immediately for the forêt. That was the magnet of the district—and instinctively one's footsteps led one thither. It was scarcely necessary to ask the way, for one had read so much about it and had seen it so often on canvas that it was almost like going to revisit one's old haunts. I remember I found my way the very first time to all the famous parts of the forest as easily as though I had been there many times before. Marlotte was very

matutinal as everyone went out very early to start work, for the forest looked at its best before the sun was too high; so the village was as a rule deserted during the morning except by those artists who had discovered beauty in its primitive streets or the surrounding lanes, and who therefore had their subject close at hand—and the inhabitants are so accustomed to artists that there was no difficulty in getting models if one required them.

I remember also a notable feature of the place was that one could paint anywhere, even in the middle of the main street, without attracting any attention—even the children had lost all interest in so everyday an occurrence as a man seated under an umbrella in the broiling sun with a canvas before him. Would that it had been likewise with the flies, for their interest in one's work never flagged.

Déjeuner was at midday, and by that time the invigorating air of the forest had sufficiently sharpened one's appetite to enable anyone to do ample justice to the simple but wholesome meal we all sat down to. If I remember rightly we were charged six francs a day, which included our morning coffee and rolls and butter, table d'hôte lunch, and dinner—including vin à discretion. The food was really very good, and there was plenty of it; but the wine—even now it gives me a peculiar sensation in the jaws when I recall it. Not that it was bad—it was worse; but at the same

"FULL OF HIS OWN CONCEIT."

time not at all harmful. It was a petit vin du pays —very new, and like drinking vinegar. Till one got used to it the results were somewhat unpleasant for several days; after one got accustomed to it one could drink with impunity. They did not stint you with it at meal times, and you could have quarts of it if you were thirsty enough; but at any other time they charged four sous for a small glass, a rather curious anomaly.

The people staying in the hotel were a curious, mixed-looking crowd, and one noticed this more particularly at lunch and dinner, as we all sat at one long table. There were all sorts and conditions—from the well-to-do French or English or American artist down to the young étudiant full of his own conceit. Of ladies there were generally a fair sprinkling, but as they were always attached and usually appeared to be in the various stages of honeymoon existence, they didn't offer much attraction to the lonely bachelor who was forced to be content with looking on. Still, it was usually a cheery gathering, as everyone soon got to know everyone else, and in the evening after dinner we managed to have some very amusing times; in the billiard-room especially, where we used to play what was known as "le jeu au bouchon." A cork was placed in the centre of the table, and the game consisted in making as many cannons as possible without knocking it over. Every time it was hit the player had to place a sou on it—and the winner

took the lot. All the ladies staying in the hotel, and many of the villagers, used to join in, as there was no limit to the number of players. Sunday evenings were especially lively, and the room would be crowded; so if one was at all adept at the game one had a most appreciative audience. It was Bohemia in the country, and it did not lose by the change of scene; the more especially as one got to bed early and got up early also.

My friend, De Penne, was as good as his word, and introduced me to everybody in the place worth knowing; so I felt I had struck a pleasant spot for work, and decided to put in a few weeks there. De Penne himself was quite a character—besides being a very distinguished and successful painter. Even down in this secluded village he retained the appearance of a boulevardier and vieux marcheur, and was quite the smartest-looking man for miles round; perhaps it was because he always painted hunting subjects and dogs that he had the look of a genial sportsman rather than an artist.

Although he lived en garçon in the village, he was very much the contrary in reality, as he had a mistress in Paris with whom he had lived on terms of the utmost comradeship, if one may use the words, for some years. I had often met her. She was a very charming and handsome woman—one of the habituées of the Café de la Rochefoucauld. She used to come down to Marlotte and stay at his house for weeks at a time as his

ward, a feeble subterfuge which deceived no one but himself. Eventually they got married; not from any compunction on his part, but simply, as he put it, because she was continually worrying him to do it—for then, as she explained, she could receive her friends, who would not visit her unless she was married. As most of the "friends" had been originally the maîtresses of their husbands, it seemed somewhat exaggerated—the aloofness; but, as I have already remarked, there is no more strict a moralist than an ex-cocotte—as is well known.

At last, therefore, he gave in, and they got married; and when they returned to their flat from the church after the ceremony I am told that the concierge, who had known them for years, came out and congratulated them; but added, Je ne vous souhaiterai pas le bonheur car vous l'avez déjà"—which was quite true, for she was really a good sort and they had been very happy together.

His house and atelier, as became a prosperous man, were also very characteristic. I remember, in particular, his bedroom was designed and furnished in the period of Henry IV.—with bed in alcove, rush mattress on the brick floor, huge tiled hearth, and peculiar old lamp; two huge boar hounds used always to sleep alongside his bed, and the effect of this old-world chamber when one first saw it was most impressive. There was another well-known painter also living at Marlotte—

Ciceri, a very old man whose work was also much in demand at that time amongst the Paris marchands de tableaux.

He was a tiny little man and his physique quite out of proportion to his reputation at the time. A curious characteristic of his, so it was said, was his conviction that he thoroughly understood women and how to manage them—and as he had been married three times there would perhaps have been some strength in his assertion had it not been for an amusing incident that had happened shortly before I arrived in Marlotte. His femme en troisieme noces was a big brawny female quite twice his weight. To the surprise of the habitués of the billiard-room of the hotel, old Ciceri had not put in his usual appearance for a couple of days; so someone was delegated to go to his house to ascertain if illness was the cause of his absence. He was shown into the atelier and found the old man hard at work, but with his face disfigured by a couple of bad black eyes. The visitor commiserated with him on his misfortune, and eventually asked how it had come about; whereat Ciceri began to explain with much volubility that he had been moving some pictures and had struck his head against the corner of the armoire, and was proceeding to give further details when a door leading into an adjoining room opened slowly and a muscular arm and clenched fist were thrust forth—whilst at the same time a strident

female voice vociferated, "Le voilà le coin de l'armoire."

Talking of old men reminds me of another rather funny story they used to tell about a certain very distinguished painter in Marlotte. I will not give his name as he is still alive. He was then about seventy-two years of age, but still fancied himself with the ladies. One night after dinner with two of his bachelor friends he said to them, "Come round and see my petite amie, she'll be delighted." When they got to the house there was a light in the window. "What a nuisance!" he exclaimed. "We shan't be able to go in; I quite forgot it's her old man's day!"

The first week of my stay in Marlotte was quite uneventful. The days passed by with nothing to specially mark one from another. One got into a methodical way of living: working all the morning—déjeuner, café, and a smoke in the garden—then perhaps, if it was too hot to go out immediately afterwards, a siesta under the trees for an hour—then work again till dinner. After dinner we would perhaps stroll as far as the railway bridge at Montigny and set one's watch by the express which passed at nine o'clock. It was a very tranquil existence indeed, and suited me after the strenuous life in Paris. Then two incidents occurred which broke the monotony. I will relate them in the order in which they happened.

One day when I got back for lunch I saw that there was a couvert laid for a new-comer at the table d'hôte, and next to me. Who could it be, I wondered? Some artist doubtless. Lunch proceeded, and just as we were half-way through, a beautiful young woman is the daintiest of summer attire entered and took the vacant seat. All eyes were immediately focused on her, for she was indeed a radiant vision amongst all these unkempt men and dowdy females. There had not been anything so attractive in Marlotte for many a long day. She brought an aroma of chic Paris into the room. The unattached painters commenced to twirl their moustaches and smooth their hair, and I mentally congratulated myself on having shaved that morning. Her neighbours on the other side were a grey-bearded artist and his wife, who wore spectacles—very uninteresting persons who seldom spoke to anyone; so it immediately flashed through my mind that, at any rate, if there was a chance of an "aventure" I could not be better placed.

Her advent was as a signal for a silence of some moments; the women stared at her as only women can when they want to be rude. The men couldn't take their eyes off her. As she was seated next to me, I could not very well turn round without being ill-mannered; I could only give an occasional glance in her direction—but I noticed she had exquisite hands, and that she had wavy red hair and the loveliest little nose imaginable.

Although she must have been aware of the attention she attracted, she apparently accepted it as homage she was but accustomed to, and her demeanour was quite calm and unruffled.

The meal proceeded as usual, and I was wondering whether, without appearing unduly presumptuous, I might venture to make some commonplace remark to her—for there was no formality about introduction at our table d'hôte, everyone spoke to everyone else if they felt inclined to. After a little while, whilst I was trying to think of something more original than the time-worn subject of the weather to start a conversation on, I heard her ask the maidservant, in a delightfully musical and Parisian voice, if there was any ice in the hotel—about the last thing one would have expected to find in Marlotte. Of course they had not any, and this gave me my opening—although it was only on the subject of the weather after all; but it certainly was exceptionally torrid that summer, and everyone was talking about it.

To my delight she was not in the least averse to entering into a conversation; she seemed rather to welcome it, I thought, and in a very short time we were chatting away on all the subjects of interest in the neighbourhood—the forest, the scenery, the village, the artists living in it, and so on; and after lunch we went and sat outside and had coffee together, and I fetched a pochade I had

made that morning to show her. My work seemed to interest her, and she wanted to know all about myself. Then we started talking about Paris; but the Bohemian world was not hers—for I soon discovered she was quite ignorant of its curious ways. I felt I wanted to ask her about herself, and why she was in this out-of-the-way place alone; but there was a certain reserve in her manner which rather intimidated me. She was so different to any other woman I had hitherto met.

We spent an hour very pleasantly, and then she rose and said she must be going as she had friends in the neighbourhood to visit. By this time I had already the deep conviction that with her as a companion life for a summer at Marlotte, or all the year round, would indeed be worth living; but I had the intuition to give no utterance to my thoughts. So beautiful a woman must, I realised, be accustomed to listening to such compliments; so anything I might say on that subject would only sound banal. I determined to stifle my feelings and try and be original—and I believe that for once I did the right thing. "Au revoir," she said as she left me.

She did not put in an appearance that evening at dinner, and I found myself aimlessly wandering in and out of the hotel afterwards in the hope of catching a glimpse of her, but in vain. "La dame qui est arrivée ce matin, Monsieur?" said

the bonne in answer to my query. "Elle n'est pas rentrée depuis quelle est sortie cet après-midi."

The following morning I was up betimes, but after having my coffee I still found myself unconsciously loitering about the place instead of getting off into the forest as usual. It was a lovely morning—just one of those days when one feels glad to be alive and well; so I had put on white flannel trousers and a collar and tie to live up to it, which was rather an exceptional occurrence at Marlotte, where we were not as I said in the habit of spending much time or thought over our appearance.

As I stood at the door irresolute as to whether I ought not to get off to my work, De Penne came along with his dogs.

"What, are you leaving us?" he said.

"No, why do you ask?" I replied.

"Because you look so smart this morning," he said with a laugh.

"I don't see anything very extraordinary in making myself look clean and tidy occasionally even in this outlandish place," I answered somewhat sharply, for I was hoping *She* would not come out whilst he was there; somehow, much as I liked him, I felt that his casual Montmartre manner with women would be quite out of place in this instance. Suddenly, as we were talking, he exclaimed, "Tiens mais, qui est cette dame qui vient par ici?"

I looked round and beheld Her. She looked

even more beautiful than on the previous day, as she came down the street in the brilliant morning sunshine. She was all in white—white dress, white shoes, white parasol; and as she was wearing no hat the effect of her gorgeous hair made a wonderful note of colour.

"Excuse me, old fellow," I said hastily. "It's a friend of mine," and I hurried away towards her, without giving him time to reply. I was conceited enough to fancy that she seemed just a little bit pleased to meet me again. I blurted out a compliment in spite of my resolve to be original; but she looked so charming I could not resist it—besides which I really felt what I said. "You must let me paint you in that dress," I continued impetuously, "you look simply lovely in it."

"One of these days, perhaps," she replied with a laugh. "Though I'm afraid I shouldn't make a very patient sitter."

"Oh, I think you would, since you have the energy to get up and go out so early."

"And you?" she said, turning the conversation adroitly from herself. "How is it you are still in the village and not away working at your picture?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I had an idle fit on me this morning," I replied, not wishing to let her know that to see her was the sole reason for my not being at work.

"It can't be helped—I shall be a great artist a day later I suppose," I added with one of my

feeble attempts at wit—which however appeared to amuse her.

"Well, you are lucky to be able to do as you please. I wish I could, for nothing would suit me better than to stroll about this lovely weather; but unfortunately I have some letters to write and must get them off this morning or I shall miss the mail."

"Shall we meet at lunch?" I ventured to ask as she turned to go into the hotel.

"Yes, I think so," she replied, with a smile that left me more smitten than ever.

If the air of France inspires romance then that of Marlotte must be more particularly potent. We met every day after this, and our acquaintance rapidly developed into friendship; and then—but why tell more—let it suffice to mention that the Gorge aux Loups will always be associated in my memory with love-making rather than with painting. Although I really did sketch her, in the intervals; but the result did not satisfy me at all, and I felt disgusted at my poor efforts to reproduce her as she really appeared to me. What, however, impressed the whole delightful episode more particularly on my memory that even now after many years I can still recall every incident connected with it—was the mystery surrounding it. Curious as it may seem, I never got to know her real name—nor even who were her friends in the village. She had made it a sort of tacit condition of our amitié

that I should not attempt to find out who she was or anything about her. And I was too happy in the feeling that I had all her love to desire to know anything more than she cared to tell me.

"My life is full of sorrow and unhappiness," she remarked suddenly, in a strained tone, to me one afternoon whilst we were sitting lovingly together in a secluded nook of the forest a few weeks later.

"Why do you say that just at this moment, dearest?" I asked, with a presentiment that I was about to receive bad tidings.

"Because I may have to go away at any moment now. I hate to have to tell you, mon chéri, but I had to sooner or later—that our amour must end when I leave Marlotte."

"End when you leave Marlotte!" I ejaculated; "but why—shall we not meet in Paris?"

"No, it cannot be," she replied with emotion, and nestling her head against my shoulder and placing her arm around my neck. "And I want to ask you to do something very, very serious for me—I want you to give me your promise that if ever we meet again anywhere you will not recognise me; from the moment I leave Marlotte you will forget we ever knew each other."

I remember as though it were yesterday how I sat in silence for some moments—I felt as though stunned. Everything suddenly seemed changed around me; it was as if a big void was before me

—that something was going out of my life. She was the first to speak.

"You will do this for my sake, won't you?" she said earnestly.

In a husky voice that I recollect sounded as if it did not belong to me I promised to do what she asked. I had no other alternative.

She drew my face towards her and kissed me passionately—her eyes were full of tears.

"We have been very happy together, mon chéri bien aimé during these few weeks; and who knows—perhaps it is better for both of us, we might have got tired of each other if our love could have become a liaison."

I uttered a protest.

"Well, perhaps I should have got tired of you," she continued, attempting to laugh through her tears, "for I'm a very fickle person and want a lot of humouring."

My heart was too full for words—so all I could do was to clasp her tightly to me, with the thought that she was still mine for a few short hours longer.

As we walked back to the village I fancied she seemed to try and be even more tender and loving, as though to soothe the blow she had been obliged to inflict on me. The next days seemed to speed by on wings. I never remember time going so quickly; but the close of our romance was near at hand, as we both realised. She was now waiting for a letter or wire which would recall her—it

might arrive at any moment. Never shall I forget those last hours we spent together. They passed as though in a dream. It was one long ecstasy of love. And then the end came, remorselessly as Fate, on our return to the hotel one morning.

"Il y a une dépêche pour Madame." It was the finish of the rhapsody.

A day after I received a tiny little note with the one word on it—"Adieu." It had been posted at the railway station at Montigny.

A few months later I had driven out to the Bois one Sunday afternoon with Monsieur and Madame Thomas, and we were seated at the Restaurant of the Cascade watching the smart crowd arriving and departing, when suddenly Madame Thomas remarked: "What a very beautiful woman that is; I wonder who she is."

I looked round and saw stepping out of a dainty victoria my lovely Inconnue of Marlotte. She was accompanied by a grey-haired elderly man old enough to be her father, but who was probably her husband. They had to pass close to where we were seated. Our eyes met. I fancied I saw her give a startled movement; but faithful to my promise I betrayed not the faintest sign of recognition. Her cloak lightly brushed my arm as she passed, and I felt a thrill go through me. That was the last time I ever saw her.

One evening I was sitting at the café reading a paper when I overheard the following conversation:

"AS THOUGH IN A DREAM."

"I hear that Mademoiselle de —— is getting married."

"Married?"

"Yes, and to a very rich old man."

"Fancy that. What will she do about her child, I wonder? Does her future husband know of it?"

"Why should he? Ever since it was born it has been en nourrice with some peasants right away down in the country somewhere, and even her own people don't know of the 'encumbrance.' The curious part of it, I'm told, is that she is quite devoted to the child, and every year manages to go down and spend a few weeks where it is."

"That doesn't surprise me, because she was always a real good sort."

I was listening without attaching much importance to the conversation when the thought suddenly struck me—might not a similar case explain my mystery of Marlotte?

CHAPTER XV

Another incident at Marlotte—The American artist—A caricature after dinner—A mysterious departure—An unpleasant surprise for Marlotte—My caricature at the Préfecture de Police—Lost in the Palace of Fontainebleau—Exciting adventure—Unpopularity—An amusing joke.

The other incident which happened whilst I was at Marlotte was not at all of a romantic character, but it was so out of the common that it quite merits being narrated at length.

One day there arrived at the hotel a peculiar-looking individual; he was an American artist he said, and as he spoke with a decided twang, and carried a large paint-box, everyone took him at his word. He was about thirty years of age, and had very long hair and an exceptionally big drooping moustache, which gave him somewhat the look of a human walrus. I will not give his name, for reasons which will be obvious. He turned out to be quite a jovial and genial sort of fellow, and gradually made friends with everyone—including even the villagers, with whom he used to chat and joke in his execrable French. Altogether he proved an acquisition to the table d'hôte.

Curiously enough, as was remarked afterwards, no one ever saw him do any painting; he always carried his big paint-box slung over his shoulder, and from that it was naturally inferred that he had been or was going sketching, but of his work no one saw anything. As he was an exceptionally good billiard player he soon ingratiated himself with the habitués of the room, and every evening after dinner, and sometimes in the afternoon, one saw him playing and usually winning their sous. He seemed to have taken a particular fancy to De Penne and old Ciceri, and this was reciprocated as he soon was invited to call on them, and became a regular visitor at their houses. To Madame Ciceri in particular he was especially attentive, and used to constantly send her bouquets from a florist at Montigny.

One evening a few of us were in the salle à manger after dinner taking our coffee, and passing the time discussing Art and what not—chiefly what not—when it occurred to me to make a caricature of the American. I had already done many whilst at the table, and used to be considered rather good at catching likenesses this way. He somewhat strongly objected at first, but he was eventually persuaded to let me do it, and as I happened to be in the humour I managed to get an amusing but at the same time striking portrait of him. Everybody roared with laughter on seeing it, and said it was better than any photograph of him

could be. The reason I lay stress on this will be seen.

A few days later we noticed that he did not turn up at lunch or dinner. At first we took no notice of his absence; then someone asked the patron what had become of him—and learned that he didn't know, but thought he must have gone to Paris.

A week passed, and as he didn't return his room was opened, and on examining his portmanteau it was found to be practically empty. He had taken everything of any value he might have had with him. His paint-box which he left behind him contained nothing whatever, not even a palette. All this would not have mattered much had he not neglected the trifling formality of paying his bill before he departed, and as he had been there several weeks, it amounted to a fair sum. But this was not all, by any means; for it then transpired that he had taken with him several small pictures from the studios of his friends Ciceri and De Penne —pictures which could be immediately converted into cash at any marchand de tableaux in the Rue Lafitte, and this was what he actually did, as we afterwards learned.

The crowning blow of all, however, concerned Madame Ciceri, to whom he had been sending the handsome bouquets—for she received a bill for them from the florist at Montigny, as he had never received a sou from the American. All this was

a very unpleasant surprise for the good folk at Marlotte. The police were put on his track, but with no result, as he had left no traces, and when I left the case appeared to have been practically abandoned; but it was not so, for I had only been back in Paris about a week when one day a stranger—an affable, well-dressed gentleman—called on me, and handed me his card, on which was his name. He was an Inspector of the Sureté. He came from the Préfecture de Police to ask me if I would kindly oblige them by lending them for a few days the caricature which they had been informed I had made of the absconding American. Of course I could not refuse; and in due course it was returned to me, together with a photographic reproduction which had been made from it with Préfecture de Police stamped on it. I have it still. This reproduction I afterwards learned was circulated in all of the police stations throughout France, and the missing Yankee was actually traced and eventually caught through its instrumentality. He got a severe sentence for his misdeeds. I have always thought that he must have had some intuitive feeling of misgiving when he so strongly objected to my making the caricature of him that evening at Marlotte.

It was shortly after this that I had one of the most curious adventures of my life.* It happened

* This adventure forms the basis of a story I wrote for the *Wide World Magazine*, and I am relating it briefly here by courteous permission of the Editor.

in Fontainebleau, where I had gone to spend a week, having obtained permission to sketch in the Palace. The romantic always had a great attraction for me, and I loved to wander through the old building by myself, and spent hours, sketch-book in hand, exploring the place, as my permit allowed me to go where I chose. One wet afternoon when there were hardly any visitors about I was strolling through one of the rooms when I noticed something peculiar in a panel of the wainscoting. On nearer examination I discovered it was a sort of metal catch or lock, and that the panel itself was a secret door. My curiosity was not unnaturally aroused. I tried it and found that it opened inward, and led into a dark, narrow corridor. The spirit of adventure was strong within me and I did not hesitate. Making sure I was unobserved, I went in and pulled the panel to after me. I then discovered that the passage led to a large private suite of rooms which had evidently not been visited for years, judging from the thick coating of dust and the cobwebs everywhere.

On all sides were magnificent old furniture and faded hangings, which gave an uncanny, ghostly look to the place, which was heightened by the old-world odour which pervaded the rooms. Here indeed was an adventure, thought I, as I made my way with ecstasy through the quaint apartments. Although not large, there seemed no end to the number of rooms which led from one to another,

interminably as it seemed—with all manner of unexpected twists and turns; whilst now and again some dark corridor indicated still further surprises.

But I had no time that afternoon to pursue my explorations as it was getting near dusk, and the time for closing the Palace, so I began to retrace my steps. I forgot to mention that as I came along I had noticed a very beautiful old clock of the eight-day description. I again stopped to admire it, and then passed on. Shortly after I was somewhat surprised to see another clock of precisely the same design; strange, I thought, as I went by it that there should be two similar. A little farther, to my amazement, I came up to yet another exactly like the two previous ones; then it suddenly dawned on me that I had been walking in a circle, that there was only one clock after all, and that I had lost my way.

I stood aghast. In an instant it flashed through my mind that unless I could find my way back to the secret door the chances of anyone coming to my rescue were almost *nil*, for I was in a part of the vast building which was probably almost unknown. So I set about attempting to retrace my footsteps by means of the furniture and other objects that had attracted me as I had come along; but to no purpose, as I soon discovered. I could not remember the way back. All the windows looked out on gardens which were deserted. It was getting dark, and the Palace

was now closed, so I could expect no help from inside, unless the attendant had noticed I had not left the building, and was looking for me.

With this hope in my mind I started walking about rapidly, and shouting at the top of my voice "Au secours." The words echoed and re-echoed through the rooms with ghostly effect, but there was no response. I now began to get seriously alarmed; and had visions of a slow death by starvation. Time was passing, and it would soon be night, so I sat down on a bed to consider my position calmly, as I felt nothing was to be gained by losing my head. How long I sat there I don't remember, as I must have dozed off I fancy; then I discovered it was now quite dark. Suddenly I heard footsteps on the gravelled walk outside, and the reflection of a light. Rushing to the nearest window I discovered, to my intense relief, that it was a watchman passing with a lantern. I frantically, by lighting a match and tapping vigorously, managed to attract his attention. The look of surprise on his face as he turned in my direction and discovered me may be imagined.

I bawled out that I was shut in, and how I'd got where I was, and after a few minutes he understood me. Then calling out to me to remain where I was he hurried off. The time now seemed interminable; but at length I heard, to my joy, footsteps resounding through the apartments, and a little group of officials appeared. I was saved.

It is unnecessary to add that there was an inquiry the following day, but my explanation satisfied the authorities—for my "permit" did not state that I was not allowed to visit this particular portion of the Palace.

Some years afterwards I was going through the building with a friend to whom I had told my adventure, and wished to show him the secret panel; but it had been masked by a big piece of furniture.

A very amusing joke was played on an artist in a café in Fontainebleau one afternoon whilst I was there. The café was used as a sort of club by its habitués who used to meet there every day for an aperitif, and of an evening for billiards. It was usually crowded about five o'clock in the afternoon. The artist in question, whom I will call Durand—in case he ever reads this—lived a little way out of the town, but seldom missed turning up at the "cercle," as the café was termed, at least once a day. He had somehow managed to make himself extremely unpopular with the other habitués, as he was always putting on "side"—a very bad offence in the eyes of the simple folks of a provincial town.

This had been resented for some time past, and attempts had been made to let him know that he was not accepted at his own valuation, and was not wanted in the café; but to no effect, as he was too wrapped up in his own conceit.

He was a big, pompous man, and his principal weakness was his belief in his ability to do anything better than anyone else in the "cercle." On all games or sport he posed as an authority. Billiards were his especial fancy—as he really could play a good game; and he was always waiting an opportunity to inveigle some unsuspecting new-comer into a match, have a bet on, and win his money; which was not considered sportsman-like at all, as may be imagined.

One day the opportunity presented itself to pay him out. An old habitué of the café, who had been away from Fontainebleau for some months, came back for a few days. He was one of the best amateur billiard players in France, had won the championship, and had often beaten professionals. He was told about all the goings-on of the unpopular painter, and agreed to join in a plot to "rag" him thoroughly. So it was arranged that the following afternoon he should be in the café, and the artist should be led on gradually and drawn into a match with him there and then for a special bet.

The next day the place was crowded, as news of what was going to happen got about. Durand came in as usual, and found himself treated with unusual friendship—invited to drink with men who seldom took any notice of him, and so on. This, of course, only helped to still further elate him in his own estimation; he evidently thought he was

a very popular fellow indeed, and his strident voice could be heard all over the café as he laid down the law on every subject he was drawn in to discuss.

Amongst those sitting round was the amateur billiard champion, who was a stranger to him. Very skilfully the conversation was turned on to billiards—and a mock discussion was started by two men, and Durand was invited to decide the question, which of course he did. And then, one thing leading to another, someone mentioned that it was well known that he, the artist, was the best billiard player they had ever had in Fontainebleau. Whereat he preened himself, and admitted that this was so; and that he was prepared to take on anyone in the district for anything he liked to name. At which there were loud cheers. Then someone pretended to take the proposition up seriously, and said that he had a man he would back against the artist; then another rejoined with his choice, but it was pointed out that all these were men whose game was too well known to be taken seriously.

Suddenly, as though by accident, someone said that he'd back Duval (a fictitious name they'd given the champion) to take up the challenge, and several men pretended to agree with him; then followed a heated discussion between the supposed partisans of Durand and those of Duval. Who was Duval? What had he ever done to prove himself a billiard player at all—he was scarcely known in the town.

However his backer persisted in his opinion that he could easily beat the other man; and would advise him to take on any bet that was made, and would, moreover, back him himself to any amount. Meanwhile the artist was being egged on to wait, and he could win anything he chose to name, so certain a thing was it; the mere idea of this comparatively unknown man daring to play against him was absurd. At last they advised him what to do, and he jumped up and called out.

"Assez—let's get to work; what's the bet—name your figure, Monsieur."

"I don't play for money," replied the other, with mock humility.

"Play him for his trousers," someone called out to the artist. "It will teach him not to fancy himself so much in future." All this had of course been planned.

Everyone crowded round; there was wild talking and gesticulating between the rival partisans, and in the end it was settled that the stake was to be the trousers the loser was wearing. The artist stroked his beard with glee, and called out to his adversary as he took off his coat to start playing, "And don't make any mistake about it, Monsieur. I shall insist on your handing them over to me here in the café." So certain was he of winning.

Well, as had also been arranged, the champion pretended to be very nervous, and missed some very easy shots at the commencement of the game

—and the excitement was intense; but with all his bad play he left absolutely nothing each time. He didn't score at all, but Durand, on the other hand, made no headway and began to lose his temper; he was unaccustomed to such unusual difficulty.

Well, this went on for a time amidst a buzz of discussion after each stroke, till at last, after missing what looked like a very easy shot, he turned to Duval and said pompously, as he chalked his cue: "This is the last chance I am going to give you, so you had better make the best of it. I'm going to start playing seriously now." But try all he could, he could not get ahead of his adversary, who won, as arranged, by apparently a brilliant effort, and with a splendid break of eight, if I remember right. The uproar was deafening, and the partisans of the winner carried him round the room in triumph. Now came the moment for settling the bet, and the artist tried all he could to avoid it, for he was no sportsman at heart. He wanted to leave the café, but this had been foreseen, and we all gathered round the door, thus making exit impossible. Then he saw that he had no longer any partisans, that everyone present was against him; "le pari—le pari, enlevez les culottes" was shouted on all sides. In vain did he protest that he would catch cold—no heed was taken; and in the end, to avoid having them taken off by force, he divested himself of the garment amidst roars of laughter and jeers. Then they

allowed him to borrow an overcoat, for it was a bleak day, and take his departure; but outside the café the news had spread, and a crowd had assembled to see the novel spectacle of a big man go through the streets in a short overcoat, and with no trousers on, and he had practically to run the gauntlet of the whole town till he got back to his lodgings. An hour later his trousers were returned to him by a messenger, who found him packing up prior to taking his departure from Fontainebleau. He had realised that he was not so popular as he had fondly imagined.

CHAPTER XVI

A visit to Moret—Funny adventure on way to station—A good-natured Frenchman—Willing hands—Arrival at station—Amusement of bystanders—Lost belongings—Incident in carriage—Disagreeable passenger—No smoking—A whistling story—Another smoking story—The bully and the bantam—A curious military incident at the Gare St Lazare—Moret and its surroundings—Lolling as a fine art.

My visits to Fontainebleau and its neighbourhood seemed somehow to be always fraught with incident for me. Shortly after the adventure I have just recounted, I received an invitation to go and spend a few days with a friend of mine whose mother had an estate at Moret, a delightful little village quite close to the forest. The chance of spending a little holiday en famille, and in such picturesque surroundings, was too good to be refused, so I gladly accepted, and arranged to go down with my friend one afternoon. When I came to pack my bag I discovered that it was in a very defective condition, and it was only after a deal of coaxing that I got it to close. However, this did not worry me much, as I knew I could take it in the carriage with me. Besides

my bag, I took my paint-box, easel, and a couple of canvases, as of course I intended to do some painting whilst I was away.

The fact of all this would scarcely be worth mentioning were it not for a funny adventure that happened on the way to the station. My friend was late in calling for me, as he had had to make several purchases for his mother; so he had quite a miscellaneous collection of parcels in the cab he came to fetch me in. The Gare de Lyon is quite a distance from Montmartre, and we had no time to spare, so we told the cocher he would have something extra in the shape of a good tip if he got us there in time to catch our train. He was game, so was his horse, and we went off at a pace that would have got him run in for furious driving anywhere else but in Paris. The way he turned corners and dashed in and out of the traffic would have made our hair stand on end, had it not been that we were fully occupied in preventing the parcels from flying out.

We had got well on the way, and were just congratulating ourselves that we were safe to reach the station in time, when suddenly in turning a corner the fiacre skidded, and with a crash off came one of the back wheels, and over we went. We were both pitched out; luckily neither of us was hurt, but all our baggage was in the road—in seemingly inextricable confusion. I never saw such a mess of things in my life. My

unfortunate bag had simply burst, and shirts and collars, clothes and boots, were in the mud. My paint-box had come open, and had shed its contents amongst the packages belonging to my friend; whilst out of one of the parcels a syrupy stream of yellow chartreuse was pouring over the wreckage. My canvases had been transfixed by the easel.

There are times when it is brought home to one forcibly that language is inadequate to express thought, and this was one of these occasions. My friend and I dusted ourselves down and surveyed the scene of desolation without uttering a word, for there were no words to cover the situation. The driver stood hat in hand scratching his head helplessly, and ejaculating at short intervals "Nom de D——, nom de D——!"

In less time than it takes to tell it a crowd had collected, and gathered round, grinning at our plight, for no doubt it was very funny to anyone not personally interested in it; but to us it meant losing our train as well as having our belongings spoilt. We looked round in despair. There was no sign of another conveyance, for the accident had happened in a by-street. Then suddenly a big man appeared on the scene and seemed to grasp the situation at a glance. He was one of those good-natured, officious sort of individuals who must have a say in everything.

"Going to catch a train, eh? Bad luck this, but can't be helped. What time have you got to be at the station? Oh, you've got time still if we can find another cab."

We were like drowning men catching at a straw. We looked at our watches. "But how about our things?" we exclaimed.

"Oh, we'll soon put them together," and suiting the action to the words, he good-naturedly started picking up our belongings and stuffing them quickly into the broken bag. His example was contagious; other willing hands helped. But if it was difficult to pack the bag quietly at my rooms, it may be imagined what it was like trying to do it in the middle of the road with everything in hopeless confusion. Just at that moment a cart came along, and had to pull up as we were blocking the road. The driver looked on with an air of interest at our frantic endeavours. Our newly found friend called out to him with an air of authority—as if he knew all about him, "You are going towards the Gare de Lyon; won't you give these two artists a lift? You see what's happened, and they will miss their train unless you are a bon enfant, as you look."

"Certainly—with pleasure," the man replied. "Chuck your things in. How much have you got to pay me? Nothing of course. What do you take me for? I'm not a cabman. You'll sort them out afterwards."

The people who were helping gave up attempting to pack, and hastily tied up everything in the first thing handy—in shirts or anything that could be made up in a bundle. What wouldn't go into a bundle went into the cart loose. Then we scrambled in ourselves, and off we went full gallop, to the accompaniment of hearty cheers from the crowd, whilst the big man yelled "Bonne chance and bon voyage, mes amis."

We got to the station and found we had missed the fast train we had hoped to catch, but were just in time for the last one of the day, a slow one which would get us to our destination a couple of hours later. There was no help for it, so hastily thanking the driver of the cart for his kind assistance, we got a couple of porters, and, much to the amusement of the people in the station, between us we managed to carry our scattered belongings to the train, where we threw them into the first carriage we came to, and which happened to have only one occupant.

We were so thoroughly excited and out of breath that for a few minutes after the train started we did not move. Then we began putting our goods and chattels together—and now came the climax. We were both quite prepared to find a lot of damage done, but to our dismay we discovered that no end of things were missing. No doubt in the hurry in taking them out of the cart they had got overlooked, or, who

knows, perhaps some of them had been annexed as souvenirs by the crowd. Anyhow, as far as I was concerned, I had come off worse than my friend, as I found I had lost one boot, my brush and comb, my palette, and nearly all the paints and brushes out of my box, amongst other items; and what wasn't lost was covered by dirt and sticky with yellow chartreuse. However, it was no use crying over it; the only thing was to make the best of it, and in a short time our youthful spirits returned, and we were laughing over the adventure. But more was to follow; it was to be an eventful journey.

I mentioned there was only one other occupant of the carriage—a sour-faced, middle-aged man, who glared on us when we made our unceremonious entrance, and still more so when the porters threw our scattered belongings in. Well, after regaining our composure we did the most natural thing under the circumstances. We pulled out our pipes and started to smoke. Suddenly there was a harsh voice from the other side of the carriage. "Je vous defends de fumer. This is not a smoking compartment."

We turned round in astonishment, as it is generally understood in France that, unless there are ladies in the carriage, one can smoke, provided, of course, the other occupants of the carriage don't object. We had omitted the formality of asking our fellow-traveller his permission.

So we hastened to apologise, and trusted he would not mind us continuing. For all reply he gruffly retorted, " I forbid you to smoke, and if you don't leave off at once I shall inform the guard at the first stopping-place, and have a proces verbal drawn up against you both."

There was no mistaking it—he intended to be nasty, and as he was in his right, we had no alternative but to give in. My friend and I looked at each other, and sat in silence for some minutes, for it was a bit of a shock. We had a long journey before us as we stopped at nearly every station, and with our luggage so damaged, it would be difficult to change our carriage easily. We were both inveterate smokers, so the prospect was not a pleasant one. I tried to think of a way to cause this surly individual as much annoyance as he had us. Suddenly a brilliant idea struck me, and without telling my friend what I intended doing, I asked him in a loud tone of voice if he had heard the funny story of the stuttering man who was cured of his infirmity by whistling.

" No," said he, guessing I was up to some mischief, " let's hear it."

The story, by the way, which is a very old one, is of a man who tells an inquisitive stranger, who has asked him why he speaks so curiously, that he once stuttered very much, but had been cured by a specialist, who had advised him, whenever he felt he was going to stutter, to draw in a long

breath and whistle. He stuttered all the time he was saying this, and finished by saying in explanation of his peculiar way of speaking, "And n-n-ow (loud whistle) I'm com-com-plet-te-ly (whistle) c-cured, a-as y-you s-s-see"—louder whistle to finish up with. Of course I prolonged the story inordinately, and every time I whistled I noticed the man, who was reading, look round and squirm, but there is no rule against whistling in a railway carriage in France. My friend at once entered into the spirit of the joke, and insisted on my telling it several times, roared with laughter, said it was the best joke he had ever heard, and then pretended to try and tell it himself, with many attempts at the whistling part especially. How long we should have kept it up I don't know, but at last our neighbour turned sharply towards us and exclaimed abruptly:

"I prefer your smoking to your whistling."

We both bowed obsequiously, but we said nothing. I fancy he felt like laughing, but managed to keep his countenance. Then we again produced our pipes, and lit up and smoked to our heart's content. He got out shortly after, and we opened the door for him with a mock deference, which must have made him feel mad, but he said nothing.

Smoking in carriages not labelled "fumeurs" is likely to lead one into more unpleasantness in France than one would expect—considering what

inveterate smokers the French are; and I recollect one occasion when it wasn't our fault there wasn't a row. A friend and I were coming back from Saint Germain one Sunday, and as the train was crowded, we jumped into the nearest carriage. It was a first-class compartment, and in it were already three passengers, two ladies accompanied by a middle-aged man. He was one of those big, heavy, unpleasant sort of fellows, who stretch out their legs, and want to occupy two seats. We were smoking cigarettes, and had jumped in so hurriedly that we had not noticed we were getting into a non-smoker.

We had barely sat down when the man in a loud, blustering tone called out to us, "You won't smoke here." He was evidently a bully, and thought he saw his chance of showing off. Of course we neither of us had the slightest intention of smoking if we were not in a smoking carriage, and he had but to inform us politely that such was the case, instead of which he spoke to us as he would have to dogs. I felt my back hair rising, and glanced at my companion to see how he had taken it, for I knew he had the temper of a very devil, and it took very little to rouse it. I shall never forget the look on his face. He was a smallish chap, but he was a rare fighter, as I knew very well, and had a heart like a lion. He looked the bully straight in the face, and said in a quiet voice, but which absolutely vibrated with passion:

"Is it to me you are addressing yourself, Monsieur?"

For all reply the man in an indescribably insolent tone said, "Oui, Monsieur."

"Bien, Monsieur," said my friend, "nous nous verrons après." Dropping his cigarette on the floor he crushed it with his foot. He then sank back, and fixed his eyes on the man opposite—with such a look that he must have realised that it was only the presence of the two ladies that saved him from having to fight then and there. This continued for some minutes. Then the man began to fidget and look uncomfortable; he had evidently realised that he was up against a tartar, for suddenly to my surprise he leaned forward, and in a tone which was in marked contrast to his former demeanour, he said to my friend in a half-whisper, so that his companions should not hear:

"I must apologise if I spoke somewhat brusquely. I don't object to smoking—in fact, could do with a cigar myself—but the ladies don't like it."

It was a big climb down, and proved him to be only a cur in spite of his size.

The mention of railway journeys and bullying recalls another incident which, although it has no connection with this particular trip to Moret, may be recounted here whilst it is in my memory. One Sunday morning several of us were going into the country for the day. Amongst the party was

a young fellow doing his service militaire, and who was therefore in uniform. He was a private in a line regiment. We were late in arriving at the Gare St Lazare, and only had just about enough time to catch our train. The station was crowded with excursionists like ourselves, and we were rushing through the big hall towards the door leading to our platform, when suddenly we heard someone call out roughly:

"Militaire, halt!"

We looked round, not thinking for a moment that it concerned us, when we discovered the speaker was a fiery-looking captain of chasseurs à cheval—and that he was calling out to our soldier companion. Although we were, as I said, already late for our train, there was nothing for him to do but halt as he was told to do. The captain came up to him and said gruffly:

"Stand at attention. Why didn't you salute me as you passed just now?"

"I'm very sorry, mon capitaine," replied our friend humbly, "but I was in such a hurry that I didn't see you."

"In such a hurry that you didn't see me, was it?" retorted the officer. "Well, I'll give you time to do it now. You will right about turn, take a hundred paces, return, and salute me, allons. Marchez."

Everybody round about stopped to watch the curious and unusual scene. It was very amusing

and interesting to them no doubt, but not so to us, as it meant that our day was spoilt. Of course our friend had absolutely no alternative but to obey. So we stood by whilst he mechanically did what he had been ordered to, as of course we would not leave him. And when he had finished, the officer, who had been watching him grimly to see that he did the movement correctly, said to him:

"This will teach you in future to keep your eyes open—however much you may be in a hurry."

Several people standing round expressed their opinion that, although he was undoubtedly in his right, from the point of view of military discipline, he had perhaps been a little too severe, and that it would not have hurt him to have taken no notice of so trivial a breach of it, considering the circumstances.

Needless to add, we missed our train.

But revenons à nos moutons—or rather to Moret. I spent a few delightful days there—as it is certainly one of the most picturesque spots in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau; the fact of its being overrun with artists is sufficient proof of this. My friend's house was very old and quaint. I well remember my delight in looking out of my bedroom window the first morning I was there. The view was magnificent, and quite unexpected, as when we had arrived it was late at night, and to all appearances, as far as one could make out

in the dark, the house was quite an ordinary building, and level with the road. To my surprise I saw that it was built in the side of an extremely steep hill, with extensive gardens running down in terraces to the river, some distance away. The entrance-hall was, as it were, on the top floor, and one went downstairs to the principal rooms, which conveyed a most curious impression.

Owing to the unfortunate mishap on the way, and the loss of my palette and paints, I was not able to do any work, so contented myself with taking it easy, and as there was plenty to see, and both my friend and I were champion flâneurs, we managed to pass away the time very easily. It is curious how pleasant it is to loll idly over the parapet of an old bridge, and gaze at the running stream beneath you, especially on a warm sunny morning. The French word flâner describes this sort of occupation very succinctly, and it is curious how easily the habit is acquired. No previous experience, knowledge, or any mental effort are necessary. It comes quite naturally to one. All that is requisite for a full enjoyment of this gift is a bridge, or, failing that, any low wall—and both these adjuncts were to be found in the quaint old town of Moret, so it was a typical place to idle in.

CHAPTER XVII

Changing characteristics of Montmartre—Advent of music—The Divan Japonais—The opening night—A merry evening—The orchestra—The audience oblige on the piano—An impromptu dance—Going round Montmartre—A "chinois sur le zinc"—The garçon de marchand de vins—An unexpected musical talent—The garçon becomes a great pianist—Christmas in Montmartre—A party in studio in the Rue Bochard de Saron—Artistic arrangements—I give an impromptu ventriloquial entertainment—Extraordinary effect—"All's well that ends well"—Another incident—A duel by arrangement—Drawing lots—An unexpected climax.

With the closing of the Café de la Rochefoucauld there came about a great change in our life in Montmartre; the place had so long exercised an influence, as it were, on our daily habits, that it is no exaggeration to state that we felt like fish out of water for some time after that final dinner in the old place. It was not easy to fill up the hiatus; and still less to find another place of rendezvous which would, even to a certain extent, replace the familiar surroundings we had so long been accustomed to. Of cafés in Montmartre there were of course no end; every street almost has its own particular établissement, which is practically the

club of its regular habitués, who are usually residents in the immediate neighbourhood—and who are always to be found there at certain times.

It was thus with the Rochefoucauld; therefore the hardship to its clientèle its closing entailed can be better appreciated. We found ourselves practically out in the street, and with but little hope of ever being again united in the cheery camaraderie we had so long enjoyed. I and my particular pals drifted somehow to the Nouvelle Athènes on the Place Pigalle, where for some time we had been in the habit of going for an aperitif and a chat before dinner. In the evenings we generally managed to put in a cheery time going round to the different cafés, and looking up friends in other quarters.

But a change was slowly but surely coming over Montmartre, and one could not but notice it; the old life was not what it was—there were signs of a restlessness that was scarcely in keeping with what one might term the traditions of the district, and this was beginning to be more noticeable in café life. The most significant symptoms of this unrest was the advent of music, not only in the établissements de nuit which were gradually springing up, but in the cafés and brasseries with which the Quartier was becoming more and more supplied. When I had first taken up my abode in the neighbourhood music was unknown almost in any of the cafés along the Boulevard's exterieurs

near the Place Pigalle, and had such an innovation been suggested to any of the proprietors of these establishments it would have been received and dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders.

The opening of the " Chat Noir " had, however, in a large measure started the change, not only in the Quartier, but also in the ideas of its inhabitants. Perhaps about the first of the cafés where music was introduced was at one called the Divan Japonais in the Rue Lepic—if I remember rightly, for it has long ceased to exist—and it caught on at once. I recollect the proprietor gave a big house-warming on the opening night, and we were all invited—and had a merry evening.

Everything in the shape of drinks and smokes was free up till a certain hour, and as this was known beforehand, most of the guests were there early, and were very thirsty till the end of the reception. There was a small orchestra consisting of pianist, a portly cornet player, and a 'cellist; and when they got tired, volunteers with musical talent and otherwise from amongst the audience obliged on the piano, and the opening ceremony ended with an impromptu dance, rather an innovation for a café in those days.

Talking of music reminds me of an interesting incident that occurred about this time. One evening a party of us were going round Montmartre—and when I mention that there were several pretty girls with us it is scarcely necessary to add that

"IN THE EVENINGS WE GENERALLY MANAGED TO PUT IN A CHEERY TIME GOING ROUND TO THE DIFFERENT CAFÉS."

we were having a lively time as usual. Suddenly, as we were going along the Boulevard Rochechouart, someone suggested our going to a marchand de vin we knew of, and having a "chinois sur le zinc"—in other words, a prunes à l'eau de vin—across the counter. Many wineshops in the Quartier made a speciality of these delicacies in those days. So we made for the particular establishment—a very unpretentious little place in a back street close by. There was no one there at the moment, and our irruption seemed to divert the patron hugely—as these wineshops are usually only frequented by ouvriers. As we were standing at the bar taking our consommations, amidst much laughter, for as no spoons are provided one has to use one's fingers, we noticed a piano in a small room adjoining; so we all went in, and someone who fancied himself as a pianist started playing a lively tune which set us singing. The patron came and stood at the door, smoking a pipe, and with his hands in his pockets; he was evidently very much interested in his unusual clients. After a few minutes he remarked that if we would like to hear some good music he had a garçon who would play to us.

"Send him along," we cried, tickled at the idea of a garçon de marchand de vins being a musician as well.

"Jean," he called out, "venez faire un peu de musique pour ces dames et messieurs."

An extremely good-looking young fellow of about twenty appeared in his shirt sleeves. After a little ironical and jocular persuading on our part, for it seemed to us too funny for words, and he must have known we were laughing at him, he sat down to the instrument. I shall never forget the look on the faces of my companions as soon as he commenced. He was a born musician—a positive genius. We all looked at each other and stood spellbound. The joke, if any, was on his side now. Without faltering, and yet in the most modest manner, he played a most complicated morceau by Chopin, a piece one would have expected to hear at a concert. When he had finished there was a great outburst of genuine applause. Our fun at his expense was changed to amazement, and we crowded round him, all anxious to know how and where he had managed to attain his marvellous ability; and learned to our surprise that he was quite self-taught. He told us that he hoped one day to get into the Conservatoire of Music if he could manage to save up sufficient money. From this moment he was the centre of attraction, to the ladies particularly—and he played and played to their hearts' content, for his repertoire appeared limitless.

The patron meanwhile stood by with an air of pride.

"What did I tell you!" he exclaimed. "I knew I was not exaggerating."

Some of us had a talk with him aside, and he told us the young fellow—who was not a Parisian —had only been with him a short time; that he had a good reference when he came, but beyond that he knew nothing about him. Then, turning to the rest of the party, he made the good-humoured but curious suggestion that as he was about to close we might like to take the musician with us and show him a bit of the Quartier, as he was new to Paris. We could not well refuse after having been thus entertained, so we got him to come along; and when he had put on his coat and hat he looked a very gentlemanly and well-bred young fellow, and we almost got jealous of the attentions the ladies lavished on him. A few days later I was passing the wine-shop and noticed the patron standing at the door; when he saw me he called out laughingly, " What have you done with my garçon? "

I stopped to ask what he meant—when, to my surprise, he informed me that he had not seen the garçon since the evening we had taken him away with us. I assured him I knew nothing whatever of his whereabouts, and was much astonished at his mysterious disappearance. That evening I learned that one of our friends had been so much impressed with the extraordinary talent of the youth, that he had interested himself on his behalf, and forthwith gave him an introduction to one of the leading men of the Conservatoire; his career, therefore,

as a garçon de café was ended, for he had been taken up by a rich man, and would be able in future to carry out his cherished desire to study music seriously. This is a great many years ago. The erstwhile garçon de café is now one of the greatest pianists of the world.

That Christmas was very lively. On one occasion a lot of us had dined together and had gone on to the Élysée Montmartre later, as there was a fête on. We were all in great spirits, and went round afterwards and finished up the evening, or rather what was left of the night, at a friend's studio close by in the Rue Bochard de Saron. There was quite a little crowd of us, and several pretty models also. We had invited ourselves, as we knew there was a piano. Our friend had told us he had nothing to offer us in the shape of refreshment—probably to put us off, as it was a bit late even for the Quartier—but we were not to be got rid of so easily. We all armed ourselves with bottles of wine, saucisses, cheese, fruit, and bread, which we bought at the café—all that one could want for an impromptu supper; after which we formed up in mock military formation on the Boulevard, someone took command, then to the accompaniment of a cheery march, which we sang in chorus, we all stepped out in grand style.

I have often thought since how absolutely impossible such goings-on would have been in staid old London—even in the most artistic

quarter—five or six years ago; only fancy such a procession at three in the morning in, let us say, St John's Wood. One can imagine the dénouement, and where it would have taken place. But in those days in Montmartre the police seldom interfered with artists, unless it was for some very flagrant breach of the regulations. And singing or, rather, making a noise at night, was not considered a very serious offence, especially during the festive season. The ebullition of youth did not suffer much restriction at the hands of the law, therefore, so long as it did not go too far.

Well, we got to the studio, and fixed up quite an imposing supper table with what we had brought with us in the way of food and liquid. It made quite a great display. We then discovered, however, the reason for our friend's reticence in inviting us to his studio for the supper, as he suddenly remembered that he had broken his only glass that afternoon, and had no plates or knives and forks. Everything was down in the country—so he said. This was a bit of a shock; but à la guerre comme à la guerre, and we were preparing to "pig it" when someone exclaimed "Eureka," and pointed to the pottery and swords and bayonets decorating the walls. In spite of our host's protests that they were thick with the dust of ages, down they came; the girls wiped them on a towel, and with an old china bowl as a loving-cup we sat down to the banquet. It was indeed an

artistic arrangement, the swords and bayonets serving as knives and forks, a sheet as a tablecloth, and towels as napkins.

We were a boisterous and merry crew, and very soon the girls were somewhat in a state of deshabille. I may here mention that I was always a bit of a ventriloquist; and whilst we were in the midst of the banquet, and the studio resounding with laughter, it suddenly occurred to me to knock loudly on the entrance-door, which was immediately at my back. This was easily done with the hilt of a sword which I held behind me; no one noticed my movement.

Immediately the din ceased.

"What's that?" the women whispered, nervously arranging their disordered attire.

I again knocked in a peremptory manner.

Our host held up his hand to enjoin our keeping silent; then shouted out:

"Who's there?"

Everyone naturally looked towards the door, not knowing what was going to happen next, for it was no friendly knock I had given. I turned also—which, of course, hid any movement of my lips.

"I am the Commissaire of Police; open in the name of the law," I called out, making my voice appear to come from outside, and then looked round to see the effect of my joke. It was magical, and surpassed anything of the kind I had ever attempted before. I could not have believed it

possible for people to be taken in so completely. Consternation was on every face. Our friend whispered hurriedly:

"Let's gather up all the things; he must not see I've been having a party. And you girls had better go and hide somewhere in my room or in the kitchen. Someone has evidently been to the police station and made a complaint about the row at this time of night. I was afraid it would happen."

I could hardly keep my countenance, but I managed to give another and still louder knock—and called out:

"Allons, ouvrez je vous dis."

At this the girls nearly went into hysterics, and made a wild scramble for the inner room; and the men hastily collected the remains of the feast. They all seemed to lose their heads—for why, I couldn't make out, for a moment's reflection would have convinced them that we were not breaking the law by having an impromptu supper-party with some models in a studio.

Emboldened by the success of my joke, I called out in a brave tone to the imaginary Commissaire: "All right; don't be angry, Monsieur. I am going to open the door directly"; and was about to suit the action to my words when to my further amazement, my friend, who was a very powerful chap, rushed forward, and seizing me roughly by the arms, held me back, saying in a voice harsh with excitement:

"Are you mad? Do you want to get us all into trouble? You mustn't open the door till the girls are out of the way!"

I pretended to struggle with him; at the same time calling out again loudly to the Commissaire that I was going to open the door, but my comrade would not let me. This time a heavy hand was placed over my mouth to prevent me saying more. I felt it was time to conclude my entertainment, or I might get hurt. I wrenched myself free, and, roaring with laughter, told them that it was only a little joke of mine.

"A joke," they all repeated—and the girls peeped in at the door on hearing the word "plaisanterie." "Where does the joke come in? Please don't make a fool of yourself; we don't want to get into the hands of the police if you do."

Never had I dreamed that my humble effort could have been so successful. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I convinced them that there really was no one outside. It was the funniest joke I ever attempted—and for a long while after it was talked about, and I was continually being called upon to speak to strangers who had got lost up the chimney, or locked in dark cellars, and couldn't get out.

All our joking did not, however, always end so happily. One one occasion there might have been an unpleasantness if not tragedy. It came about this wise.

Several of us were in the Nouvelle Athènes one evening when someone, who was reading a paper, remarked that there appeared to be quite an epidemic of duelling in Paris at the time. One read of duels in the papers every day.

"It's all an advertisement," said someone else; "no one ever gets hurt, or very seldom at any rate."

This led to a lively discussion on the easy way a man could gain a reputation for being a duellist and a man of great courage.

"It's the simplest thing in the world; you've only got to arrange everything carefully and systematically beforehand—a public insult, exchange of cards, appointment of seconds, meeting arranged, then two shots fired at the regulation distance but with blank cartridge—and honneur est satisfaite. The adversaries shake hands and go off with their seconds to a nice little lunch somewhere—and all the papers would speak about the affaire."

The idea struck us all as being so original and fraught with such possibilities that someone suggested what a splendid joke it would be to have a duel in our own set. The idea was taken up with enthusiasm; and we started to arrange the details for it to come off that evening. It was settled that we should draw lots to decide who were to be the principals. Every part in connection with the duel was written on small pieces of paper, put into a hat, and we agreed to abide by the result. I

drew one of the "seconds," someone else "the doctor," and so on. The principals turned out to be two burly fellows who would look very impressive in their rôle.

When this was done, a long discussion ensued as to the most effective and theatrical way of bring-about the spoof result. This was somewhat difficult to decide on, but at length it was settled that the two principals should be sitting playing picquet in a café and a quarrel should occur between them; we would all interfere, and then suddenly one of them would spring up and pretend to smack the other across the mouth, whereupon he would instantly produce his card and hand it across the table, saying that his seconds would wait on his aggressor the following day. It worked out capitally; we had a dress rehearsal there and then—and were so elated at its realism that we decided to carry it out at once; and one of our party, a journalist, promised to send an account of the "incident" at once to the papers, so as to prepare the public for a bloodthirsty duel. I forgot to mention that the man who had drawn the paper which assigned to him the part of the insulted party was a somewhat peppery and very conceited individual, just the sort of chap who would be likely to get into trouble.

Well, off we started for the café, where the preliminary proceedings in the way of the smack in the face and exchange of cards were to take place.

We had chosen one some little distance away—in order to run no risk of meeting anyone likely to know us. As we went along we rehearsed our various parts. At last we arrived at the café, and just as we were going in the "insulted" party, who had been very silent as we came along, suddenly stopped us and said, "Let's clearly understand what I've got to do—so as not to make any mistake."

"Well, it's very easy to remember," replied his "aggressor." "You call me a sacré couillon or anything worse than that if you can think of anything; I jump up and smack you across the mouth and you then pull out your card and hand it to me."

"After I've hit you back?"

"Of course not—you don't hit me at all; that's part of the compact that leads to the duel."

"Oh, don't I? Well, I'm not going to let you hit me without returning it, compact or no compact—so I warn you. I'll hand you my card afterwards."

That duel was off.

CHAPTER XVIII

Some strange examples of Bohemianism—The hidden treasure—An unexpected meeting after several years—A pathetic story—The dead child—Another incident—A bad-tempered, jealous woman and a meek artist—The worm turns at last—A dramatic ending to a collage—Perverted Bohemianism—The young student and the married woman—Ruin and disgrace—The usurers of the Quartier Latin—Their hunting-ground and their agents—The spider and the fly—Speculative risks of money-lenders—Cherchez la femme—Contrast between Paris and London—Student life.

WHILST I was living in Montmartre I came across some strange examples of Bohemianism amongst the artists. Here is one, for instance, which I think would be hard to beat; anyhow, it proves, if nothing else, that truth is often more curious than fiction.

A painter I knew very well was living en ménage with a petite amie in a small studio on the Boulevard de Clichy. He was one of the lucky ones to this extent, that he had a small income of his own—very small, but sufficient to prevent him from starving. Still, he had to be very careful indeed; otherwise he had great difficulty in getting through every quarter till his next remittance arrived. Occasionally, however, he was lucky enough to

earn a little extra with a portrait or with a black-and-white drawing; and on these occasions, with the usual insouciance of the artist, he would have a "bust up"—"Il s'en payait pendant quelques jours," as he used to put it. And he and his amie would have a real good time whilst the unexpected funds lasted. It was no doubt stupid; but, as I have said, he could never actually starve whatever happened, so there was no particular reason for him to save money.

Well, it was shortly after one of these festive occasions and when the quarter was barely commenced, that he found himself "dans la puree la plus épaisse." It was Carnival time, and the money had simply melted away, and one morning, after an especially lurid night of revelry, he found himself confronted with a peremptory demand from his propriétaire for the rent of the studio without delay—and he had not got the wherewithal to meet it. As a rule, his landlord was not in a hurry for his money; but this time he was not inclined to be lenient. He had just received a letter from a rich uncle from whom he had expectations saying he would be in Paris shortly after, and that inspired confidence in the future; but the immediate present had to be dealt with—what should he do? His landlord, as he knew from experience, was one of those obdurate individuals who, when they take it into their heads to collect the rent due to them, know no delay; and it may here be mentioned

that in France the law gives the landlord full power to distrain, if he is so minded, within a few minutes of rent becoming due.

The concierge, who usually acts as his agent and collects the rent, waited patiently for a little while, and then said that unless the money was forthcoming by midday he would have to report to the landlord and a distraint would be put in. What was to be done? My friend's first impulse was to rush out and endeavour to borrow the money from some of his pals—and started off at once on what turned out to be, as may be imagined, a futile expedition, as they were none of them much better situated than he was. He returned to the studio full of wild ideas of suicide, and so forth; for a distraint meant that all his worldly belongings must go.

He and his amie sat and gazed at each other in mute despair. This then was the end of their little love dream—to be turned into the street and with nowhere to go to for the sake of this paltry sum for the rent. Could nothing be done to avert the disaster?—for if it happened and his uncle arrived to find him in such a plight it was certain that all expectations in his will would be quashed. A strait-laced provincial such as he was would never forgive such a disgrace on the part of a nephew.

The time went by on wings, and it was already eleven o'clock; only one hour now separated them from the dreaded dénouement—yet they were no

nearer getting the money than they were to the moon. His amie went and sat on his knee and affectionately placing her arm round his neck, kissed him tenderly and hinted at the sweetness of their dying together. Their tears mingled. Suddenly she gave a little shriek, and jumping up rushed to the corner of the studio, and with an exclamation of wild delight, held up a golden louis she had seen shining on the floor.

Here was indeed a bit of luck, for, at any rate, it was something towards the necessary sum; but how it had come there, for it was certainly unusual to find money lying on the floor of a studio. Who could have dropped it? No artist friend and no one likely to possess superfluous wealth had been there for days.

All of a sudden my friend gave a positive yell of delight. "We are saved," he called out, "saved."

"How?" asked his amie in an amazed tone.

"Yes, saved," he repeated excitedly, and embracing her joyfully. "There's enough not only to pay the rent, but to have a bit over—here in the studio."

"In the studio," she reiterated, with a thoroughly puzzled air.

"Yes, we've only got to look for it—it's here for the finding." Then he explained how some months previously he had had an unexpected slice of good-luck and had made several hundred francs,

and was so elated at his sudden accession to wealth that the idea had occurred to him to lay by a certain amount against a rainy day; and as he had no place where he had considered the money would be quite safe, and where he could not get at it too easily, he had suddenly conceived the extraordinary idea of putting it in odd places haphazard about the studio, so that when he was hard up there would be a certain amount of sport in hunting for it. He had carried out his idea by shutting his eyes and throwing a louis here, a ten-franc piece there, and so on, till he had practically hidden a couple of hundreds francs in this way. As he did not employ a femme de ménage, and no one came into the studio but his amie, the floor, dirty though it was, was therefore under the circumstances a veritable mine of riches. The curious part of the affair was that he had completely forgotten the existence of this hoard until the louis had providentially turned up.

When the concierge returned shortly before midday for the rent, the look of astonishment on his face may be imagined when he found the pair on their hands and knees on the floor, covered with dirt, and groping here and there and everywhere in feverish haste amongst the rubbish with which the studio was littered. When, however, he learned the reason of it all his astonishment turned to amusement, and he good-naturedly offered to give them another hour or so to enable

them to find the requisite amount, as it was still a few francs short; but even whilst he was speaking it turned up, and so "la situation êtait sauveé," as he put it.

Bohemianism in Paris, however, had often a pathetic aspect, and at times revealed depth of character that would perhaps have never been known to exist had the conditions of living been otherwise. This was more frequently noticeable in the women; possibly for the reason that with the men their life in the Quartier was but a passing stage, as it were, and seldom left any lasting impression. A pretty girl, a broken heart, were of but small import when the grande question of one's career was to the fore. I recollect a particularly touching incident in this connection.

I was dining one day at a large brasserie with a friend who had not long returned from the Colonies. He was a Government engineer and many years my senior, but somehow in spite of the disparity of our ages we had become great pals, and frequently went about together. We had not long been seated when a waiter came up to my friend and told him that a lady at a table near us was trying to attract his attention. Naturally we both looked in her direction, and I saw a very pretty young woman smile towards my friend and wave her hand in greeting. To my surprise, on seeing her, he gave a sort of gasp as though he had received a shock, and although he stood up and

genially returned her salutation, I could see he was deadly pale and looked terribly upset at the meeting. As the lady was dining with a gentleman whom he evidently did not know, there was of course no excuse for him to go across to her table. When he resumed his seat he gulped down a glass of water and muttered half aloud:

"Who would have thought of coming across her here after all these years?"

I said nothing, feeling it was best for him to tell me anything he cared to. I had no desire to intrude on his privacy. He was silent for some minutes, then turned to me and said:

"You must excuse me, mon vieux, for being so distrait, but it is plus fort que moi. I cannot help it; you cannot imagine all she was to me once, and to see her with another man upsets me beyond words, although it is many years since I last saw her."

"You were very fond of her then?" I remarked.

"Yes indeed; and I believe she cared more for me than anyone else in the world."

"Then how did you come to break it off?"

"Well, my father got to hear of my liaison and determined to end it, though I did not realise it then; so when my time was up at the École Polytechnique, he got me, through the influence of a friend at the Ministère, a mission d'étude de mines in the Sénêgal, and as I was absolutely dependent on my allowance I had no alternative but to

accept. I was to be away for three years—with the possibility of a good Colonial post to follow. Marcelle, that's the name of the little girl over there, was naturally very upset, but was too good-hearted and sensible to wish to stand in the way of my getting on in my career; but—here was the trouble—she was in a certain condition, and I was far too fond of her to leave her in any doubt with regard to the future—so I arranged that she should receive a certain sum every month through a great friend of mine. She was not an extravagant girl, so there would be ample for her needs, whatever happened.

"Well, I went off, and was away in the interior several months, where no letters could reach me. At last I got back to the coast, and amongst a packet of correspondence were several from her, in which she told me how much she missed me—and hoped I would come back to her safely; and then another in which she wrote that our child had been born, but had only lived for three months, that after its death she had decided to go back to her parents in the country—that they had forgiven her everything; and she ended by wishing me good-luck and so on. A long letter, brimming over with affection; but somehow I had an idea, on reading it, that there was something in her mind—something that the mere words did not express. I had heard of a woman's nature changing under certain conditions; and so it turned out in this instance,

for that was the last letter I received from her, although I wrote time after time."

There was a long pause, and then he suddenly added, as though he had been recalling his souvenirs, "You have no idea, mon vieux, how one suffers when one is far away and in the wilds, and one is waiting for a letter from someone one loves and it never comes; the days drag on with maddening slowness—and then the mail again arrives and still there is nothing. One is so helpless, for what can one do?—nothing but hope on against hope. And so it was with me, and the years passed by with no further sign. She might have been dead for all I knew. And at last when I got leave and returned to France and Paris, my first idea was to seek her. I had been thinking it over for so many months in the long days in the Bush—and was so looking forward to our meeting; but she had left no address, and I had no notion where her parents lived—except that it was somewhere near Chaumont, a very vague indication. Besides which I knew the name she went by at the theatre was not her own. Well, the time passed by and my leave was up, and I went back to the coast for another spell, and stayed away two years; and here I am de retour—and we suddenly meet like this. Strange, is it not?"

I agreed with him that it certainly was very extraordinary after their affectionate relationship, and took a furtive glance towards the lady who had

taken such a hold on his life. She was certainly very pretty and evidently a charming personality as well. Her companion was a young fellow almost of her own age, and appeared to be devoted to her; and that there had been no secret in her knowing my friend was evident by the manner in which he frankly looked in our direction. We had not yet finished our dinner when I saw them getting up to leave, and she beckoned to my companion to go over and speak to her. He went with alacrity, his face beaming. I carefully refrained from looking at their meeting, as I did not wish to appear inquisitive; but I could not help noticing that her companion walked on so as to leave her alone.

My friend was not gone long, and when he returned to his seat I noticed his eyes were full of tears.

"It's all over," he said in a hoarse voice. "That's her husband with her—she's been married nearly three years. I asked her why she had not written again and she told me she had thought it best when the child died that our liaison should end, so that I should be quite free. Quite free!" he repeated bitterly, talking to himself. "Why should she have thought that—when I was always thinking of her? And then," he continued, turning to me, "she showed me a little locket she said she wears always, and in which is a lock of our child's hair. She was passionately devoted to her baby and was

very ill after it died. I wanted her to come and see me now and again as old friends, but she refused—'the past was buried,' she told me significantly; and her husband is too good to her for her to wish to cause him pain—in fact he knew all about it, and had allowed her to speak to me, as he trusted her implicitly. She had felt she wanted to shake hands with me and tell me how pleased she was to hear I was back safely and doing so well in my work; but we must not speak to each other again. Nothing I could say would change her resolve. Then she said she must not keep her husband waiting, so must say good-bye and run away. Then just as she was going she came back and told me, in a low tone, with tears in her eyes: 'Do you know, dear, that if he had lived he would have been seven years old now; it was the anniversary of his death last week, and I came up to Paris specially so that I could go and put some flowers on his grave, as I have done every year, and as I shall always do.'"

His voice sunk to a hoarse whisper, thick with deep emotion, and I had to turn away to avoid letting him see how deeply his story had affected me also.

Of course it was somewhat exceptional to meet girls of this description, and I knew several men whose lives were simply little hells owing to the temperament of the women they had got inextricably mixed up with—one in particular who could

"SHE WAS OF SO JEALOUS A NATURE."

scarcely call his soul his own. His maîtresse was extravagant to such a degree that although he was fairly well off he was always hard up, and had to have recourse to all sorts of shifts to get money to satisfy her wants principally. If she saw anything she took a fancy to, she was like a child crying for a toy; she must have it—otherwise there was a row, and he was all that was mean and contemptible, for she could come out under very slight provocation with language that would have shocked a dame des halles. Added to this, she was of so jealous a nature that she actually interfered with his work and forbade him to have models in his studio under any pretext. She would scratch his face at one moment, and then when she saw him bleeding would seize hold of him and devour him with kisses. She was what is aptly termed in France une femme impossible.

I recollect lunching with him at his studio on one occasion, when there came a ring at the bell; immediately I could see her prick up her ears, so to speak—and when the femme de ménage called him out to see the visitor it was a sign for trouble. Although I endeavoured to engage her in conversation whilst he was out of the room I could plainly see her thoughts were elsewhere. In her silly mind she was conjuring up all sorts of intrigues on his part; and after a few minutes she could contain herself no longer, but jumped up, regardless of the fact that it was positive rudeness to me, her

guest, and bounced out of the room. She left the door open, so I could hear her calling out in a tone of suppressed rage:

"Emile, qui as-tu dans l'atelier, viens ici tout de suite?"

Scenting the approaching storm, my friend came out looking very sheepish—as well he might, at being spoken to like that when he had a business acquaintance with him. With a humility for which I felt he ought to have been kicked, he explained that he would only be engaged a few moments longer, and begging his chérie to excuse him; but she was not to be placated.

"Viens tout de suite—j'ai à te parler——"

I could then hear the man who was with him saying significantly he would call again some other time when Monsieur was not engaged—and my friend had not the moral courage to detain him.

When we were again seated at the table the storm broke forth, and to my surprise, for I could see no cause for jealousy, or in fact any unpleasantness, his mistress flatly accused him of having the man call to arrange for him "to meet some young girls." "Tu ne penses qu'à cela?" she continued, working herself up into a fury.

There was, of course, not the slightest cause for all this scene. My friend was the last man in the world to have such thoughts or to dream of having anyone call on him she objected to; but it could not be expected that he should turn away business

callers. But with her any pretext was sufficient to start a quarrel upon, and she had gradually ended by alienating even his most intimate friends; they used to say that it made them feel positively sick to see a man reduced to the condition of a mere worm under the heel of this woman.

I was one of the last of his friends to visit them —as somehow I exercised a sort of placating influence over her, and I was the only one she admitted she trusted with her amant. I believe she actually considered me as incapable of any penchant for the fair sex—so if I suggested taking him to the café for an aperitif without her she would graciously condescend to confide him to my care. "Avec vous au moins il n'y a pas de danger," she would say with a half-sneer which galled me beyond words, and I determined to get even with her. It was on these rare occasions when I got him alone that I used to try and instil a little pluck into him.

"What do you see in her that you stand all this continual nagging and rowing. She is no longer young or particularly good-looking; has she then some hidden charm that makes up for her awful character?" I once ventured to ask.

The poor fellow shrugged his shoulders weakly. "Que voulez-vous?" he replied. "We have got together somehow, and I suppose I must put up with it. I admit that Paula is a bit trying at times, but elle m'aime bien."

"Well," I replied, "if that's love, and that is the way to prove it, I would rather be without it."

The fact of the matter was that she completely terrorised him. She had frequently thrown out hints that if ever she even saw him speaking to another woman she would blind him with vitriol, and I verily believe she meant it. So he apparently resigned himself to his fate—for the time being, as will be seen.

Well, this terrible existence continued for many months, during which the creature got, if possible, even worse tempered; and at length became obsessed with the notion that everyone was conspiring to alienate her amant's affections from her—everyone except me bien entendu, for she still reposed blind confidence in me as an "impotent," scarcely worth considering. So I still continued to lunch or dine with them when I felt inclined. But I noticed a change coming over my friend; he was beginning to look drawn about the face and there was a strange look at times in his eyes when she started a scene—for we seldom sat down to a meal with any certainty of its ending pleasantly, however happily it may have been commenced.

When he and I went to the café for our aperitif we would always discuss the situation. There was really no other topic of conversation under the circumstances; and on one occasion I remember,

after a particularly dreadful exhibition on her part, he wailed out plaintively to me, " Mon Dieu, comment cela va-t-il finir, que faut-t-il faire."

I gripped his arm and said, " Be a man—that's the only advice I can give you."

He sat very still, as though wrapped in thought, for some time; then, as though he had come to a sudden resolve, he swallowed his aperitif, and turning to me said abruptly, and in a tone of voice I scarcely recognised, " Tu as raison, mon vieux—come or we shall be late for dinner."

When we reached the studio Paula met us at the door. I could see that she was still in one of her tantrums.

" A nice time to get back," she vociferated; " dinner has been ready for over half an hour and everything will be spoiled as usual. Why do you let him keep you out so long, Julius," she said, turning to me.

I protested that if there was any blame I would share it; but that we were not late at all, as I proved by my watch.

" There you see, ma chérie," said Emile in a pacific tone, " your clock must be wrong—I knew we were not late."

" Tais-toi et mettons nous à table; we'll speak about this afterwards," she replied in a threatening tone.

I endeavoured to laugh it off—but felt very uncomfortable. We sat down to dinner and were

taking our soup, when she suddenly turned to my friend and said, " I insist on knowing what detained you so long at the café. I suppose it was some woman of your numerous acquaintances. Come, out with it—let's know who she was," she continued, spoiling for a row.

My friend protested that there was no woman in the question; that we had merely taken our aperitifs together and had not spoken to a soul since we left her. But it was of no avail.

" You are telling me a lie, and you know it," she cried. " However, only let me catch you at any game of that sort and I'll show you up in a way you little suspect, mon ami. So I warn you."

My friend said nothing, but I saw from the pallor that came over him that he was labouring under intense excitement.

She, however, saw nothing, but continued like a fury. " Will you reply to me, or will you not? Who was the woman you have just left? I insist on knowing her name?"

No reply. There was none to make. This silence seemed only to exasperate her the more; the bad language then commenced, as it always did with her when she let herself go. My friend then, in a supernaturally calm voice, which in itself should have warned her, then said gently: " Ma chérie, I beg of you not to forget yourself; even if you ignore me, please remember that my friend is present."

At this remark all the floodgates of her devilish temper were opened.

" Ton ami, je mon f—— de tes amis comme je me f—— de toi sâle enfant de ——" Here followed an insult levelled at his mother of such a nature that I refrain from writing it. Its effect was as though she had put a light to a powder magazine. My friend jumped up as if he had received an electric shock, and with a look of hatred in his eyes I shall never forget, he fairly yelled at her " Sâle vache. You've gone too far this time," and without a moment's hesitation seized his glass of wine and flung it straight in her face. By a miraculous chance the glass itself missed her and smashed against the buffet behind; but she received the full contents all over her, and was almost blinded for a second.

" Get out of my place at once," he continued, fairly mad with rage, " or there will be murder done. I've put up with you and your damned temper long enough, so out you go at once—and to the devil. I give you five minutes to pack up and go. You hear me, you infernal b——"

To my utter astonishment, for I was on tenterhooks as to what she would do, she got up, and wiping her face and bodice she retreated slowly and backwards towards the door—her eyes fixed steadily meanwhile on my friend. She appeared to be completely stunned at his unexpected outburst of spirit after so many months of humility

and weakness and giving in to her. She was like a wild animal that suddenly realises it has got a master; all her spirit and temper were gone.

We stood and waited; neither of us said a word. She reached the door, opened it with a mechanical sort of movement, and was gone. We heard her go into the bedroom and shut herself in; then we sat down and looked at each other, wondering what was going to happen next. Ten minutes or so passed, then the door of the bedroom was opened and we heard her call out to the concierge below, "Madame will you be so good as to call a cab for me and come and give me a hand with my portmanteau?" Then we heard luggage being taken downstairs, and the voice of the concierge asking if Madame was going away for long. "Yes," was the reply. "I am uncertain when I shall return." The outer door of the studio closed with a bang. As it did so, my friend who had been breathing heavily, jumped up calling out, "Paula, Paula, oh reviens," and would have rushed to the door and after her had I not stood in his way and held him back.

"I'm not going to let you make an imbecile of yourself," I cried. "You are well out of it at last, and you ought to think yourself very lucky to have got rid of such a woman."

He stood irresolute, undecided whether to attempt to force his way out. Then we heard the

sound of the cab driving away. For a few seconds we neither of us moved, then to my utter amazement he let himself drop into a chair by the table, and burying his face on his arms he sobbed convulsively like a child. It was the inevitable reaction—for he had loved the woman once, but I felt it would do him no good giving way to it, so after a while I touched him on the shoulder and said as firmly as I could, "Come, buck up, old man, and let's go out and get some dinner, because I'm famished." With an effort he pulled himself together, and after a meal and a good bottle of wine, he was quite himself again and we discussed the event dispassionately. That he had nothing to fear from her I was convinced; he had given her a fright which she was not likely to forget in a hurry.

We returned to the studio late in the evening, as I had promised not to desert him that night, so would sleep on the sofa. We found that Paula had taken away everything belonging to her, even to her photograph. There was no sequel to the incident; for strange to relate from that day she disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed her up. Where she went to or what became of her was a complete mystery. As may be imagined, my friend evinced no desire to find another mistress after this experience. I lost sight of him for a time, and we did not meet again till one day some months later at the Salon. He

rushed up to me and wrung my hand effusively. He was genuinely delighted to see me.

"I must present you to my wife," he said after the first greetings. "She knows all about that affair of Paula," he told me as he led me to a settee where a buxom lady was seated.

"This is my old friend Price," he said, as he introduced me to her. "My saviour," he added with a laugh.

The lady shook me warmly by the hand and said graciously. "I need not tell you how pleased I am to meet you after all I know you did to help Emile to get rid of that dreadful creature."

I recollect another instance of what may be termed perverted Bohemianism, but which ended very differently to what I have just described. It conveys, however, an idea of another aspect of student life which invests it with a certain morbid interest.

A young étudiant fell in love with a married woman living in the Quartier, separated from her husband. She was many years older than her youthful amant, and had a child—a little girl eight years of age. His calf love developed into a veritable infatuation, and there was no limit to what he would do for her. She was a flashy woman, very fast, and with most extravagant ideas. Although she was fond of him in her way, she did not spare him or even attempt to dissuade him from spending all his extremely small allowance

on her. Not the least curious part of his infatuation was the devotion he displayed for her child as well, and he became passionately attached to it. There was nothing he would not have done to give it pleasure, which naturally helped still further to increase the strain on his slender means.

There could be but one ending to such a state of affairs. Every sou he possessed gradually went; he neglected his studies, and at last was reduced to borrowing small sums to meet his daily expenses, which had increased by leaps and bounds since he was living en ménage. Then it got to his father's ears how he was living, as the money-lender had to be paid; so he came to Paris, made a great scene, paid the money-lender, and took the boy back with him to the country for a time, in the hope that by so doing he would make him forget his youthful infatuation.

After a few months of seclusion he allowed him to return to the Quartier to resume his studies, as he appeared to have become quite reconciled to his enforced separation; but it turned out that all this while the youth had been keeping up a correspondence with his enchantress, and no sooner was he back in Paris than they met and he resumed his interrupted love-making. For some time after this he lived at a pace which was bound to end in disaster. She was more exigeante than ever. Jewellery, expensive dinners, theatres, excursions, were the order of the day. To satisfy these end-

less demands of his maîtresse, he had to obtain money somehow, by fair means or foul; and as the money-lender was chary of advancing him any more after the scene with his father, he forged two names to two bills—one that of his father, the other that of a prominent tradesman in the town he came from—probably in the belief that when they were presented his father would again pay up rather than have a scandal—for by this time, it is almost needless to add, his finer senses were completely blunted, and, young as he was, he had begun to take to drink, and to mix with doubtful characters.

Well, to cut an unpleasant story short, in due course the bills were presented, and his distraught parent, thinking to save the family honour, met the one bearing his signature; but the tradesman whose name had also been forged had no such compunctions, and it passed into the hands of the police, and nothing could stop the subsequent legal proceedings—with the result that the embryo criminal was arrested and got three years' imprisonment.

What became of him afterwards, when he had completed his sentence, I never heard definitely; but there were rumours of his having been seen prowling at night round the Boulevard's exterieurs in a garb which left but little doubt as to his manner of existence. One thing, however, was certain, and that was that his maîtresse threw him over at

the very first sign of trouble—although she was actually responsible for his downfall.

It came to me as somewhat of a surprise, how easy it apparently was for a young fellow to obtain money whilst he was a student and with only a very limited allowance. Of course I had heard that it was possible if one was in the know to obtain temporary financial assistance without having recourse to the Mont de Piéte, where the amount one could obtain would only be trifling; but to find that merely on a sort of note of hand sums running into quite a respectable figure were often handed over to students, who were still under age, was to me quite incomprehensible, and I sometimes wondered if I would be trusted likewise, but fortunately for me I never had occasion to ascertain.

The Quartier Latin in those days, as I soon learned, was infested with usurers of the worst type; and to my knowledge many a young étudiant's career was marred through his falling into the clutches of these human vampires. Of course this state of affairs may and probably does exist to this day, but I am only referring to my own time. I heard of many cases which would have been almost incredible had I not personally known of their absolute truth. The method with which these financiers carried out their operations was quite remarkable at times in its ingenuity, and no expense apparently was spared in order to obtain

exact information as to the means of the parents or guardians of the prospective victims. Once this was obtained and verified carefully, it was merely a question of time when the fly would walk into the parlour of the spider. A mistake was seldom made. In the Rue Monsieur le Prince, Rue Cujas, and the Rue St Jacques especially, were always to be found obliging gentlemen who would advance money at any moment on note of hand only—without security, as it appeared to the guileless youth who was in temporary need of assistance.

At all the big cafés there were agents of these money-lenders who worked on commission, and who therefore made it their daily business to ascertain the names of those students who were going the pace. Not infrequently these commission agents were women, and who therefore had a better chance of knowing what was going on than a man would have, as it was a comparitively easy matter for a woman to make friends with the amie of the victim. The cabinets de toilette at the different restaurants were a favourite hunting-ground of these harpies, as the attendant generally knew all that was going on in the Quartier. If such and such a girl's friend was known to be hard-up, in spite of his having a good allowance from home, then it was only a question of how much his father would be good for if the son could be induced to start borrowing. Little did these happy-go-lucky

youths guess how much was already known of their affairs when they eventually made their way to the bureau of one of these money-lenders.

In France there is a legal limit to the amount of interest that can be charged, but this could be easily overcome; as, for instance, if a young man was suddenly pressed, say for a thousand francs, what was there to prevent him out of pure gratitude for being helped out of his difficulties from giving a bill for fifteen hundred francs—payable on a certain date? On the bill there would be no mention of the amount advanced, but merely what he owed. The odd five hundred francs might represent fifty per cent or more, but could not be disputed; he acknowledged owing a certain amount, that settled it.

As I have said, the patience and ingenuity displayed by the usurers and their agents were often quite remarkable—and frequently quite well acted. I heard of one case of a young fellow, whose family was very rich, getting hard up. He had no maîtresse attitrée through whom he could be induced to go to a money-lender, so one of the prettiest girls of the Boulevard St Michel was got at, and eventually worked for one of them. It took some time to bring off the coup, but the quarry was worth it, and it was done this way. She was clever enough to play up to him and get him to take her about a good deal; he was a generous, but extremely vain young fool, and she acted her

part so well that he really believed he had found someone at last who loved him. Then at length came the eventful day. She arrived at his rooms in great trouble. She must have a certain sum by a certain hour to save her favourite brother who had done something foolish and would be arrested and go to prison if the money was not forthcoming. What could she do? She had not got it, so she had of course thought of her petit ami; he would help her out of her great trouble.

How could the ami, as a gentleman, avoid helping her, after the happy times they had spent together; but he was not in a position at the moment to do what she asked, however much he wanted to. He could not write home for the money as he had already overdrawn his allowance; how could he get the sum she required?

Had he no friend who would oblige him? she would ask—knowing very well he had not. No, he knew of no one. Then a sudden inspiration came to her—she remembered that one of her friends had also an ami who suddenly wanted a few hundred francs; and he was told of a gentleman who took a great interest in students who would let him have them if he was satisfied he was a man of honour, and he got the money quite easily of course, and paid it back when his allowance came. She would go and see her friend at once, and find out the name and address of this gentleman; and perhaps he would do the same this time also.

What could the victim do but consent to do his petite amie a good turn; and shortly after he was introduced to a very affable gentleman who was only too delighted to come to his assistance, and had put his coveted signature to a piece of paper which was but the forerunner of many more that were eventually taken up by his father, as had been conjectured would be the case. All this would seem a very roundabout method of getting hold of young spendthrifts, were it not, as I have pointed out, that in France it is only allowable by law to charge at a certain fixed amount for interest. In those days I believe it was only five per cent, but at any rate it was far too small to satisfy a money-lender, who was, of course, taking a speculative risk.

The great saving clause, however, in France with regard to all these transactions is that borrowing on a reversion "sur une succession" is absolutely illegal. So whatever expectations a young étudiant might have, the money-lender could not reckon on his claim being settled out of them. If he chose to lend him money on a bill it was therefore with the knowledge that if the father or guardian or whoever supplied the allowance refused to settle for the youth, he had lost his money—as he had no claim against a minor. It seems a pity that such a law has not existed in England, as many a family would have been protected against the misdeeds of sons who, whilst "sowing their wild oats," have squandered away fortunes.

It will be noted that in all these incidents it is always a case of cherchez la femme; as a matter of fact this is one of the chief characteristics of Bohemian life in Paris, and it is this eternal feminine that gives an element of romance to what would otherwise often present an unsavoury aspect. In no single instance that I can recall which came to my notice was the usurer ever approached for the purpose of raising funds for anything but expenses incurred for a petite femme. Gambling debts such as one constantly hears of in an English University city were unknown in the Quartier Latin, or for the matter of that in Montmartre. Of course I only refer to the class of young fellows, students and so forth, with whom I came in contact. They had doubtless many weaknesses, but these were usually what one would expect in youth and early manhood, though devotion to the fair sex was the dominating feature always. Drinking was practically non-existent in my time, and it is probably the same to this day; for the light beer, coffee, and harmless aperitifs, which are part and parcel of the daily life, can scarcely be considered as indulgence in liquor.

How different all this to the corresponding conditions of student life in England—where Bohemianism generally means living in dreary, frowsy lodgings with surroundings of such deadly monotony that one is forced to find relaxation in

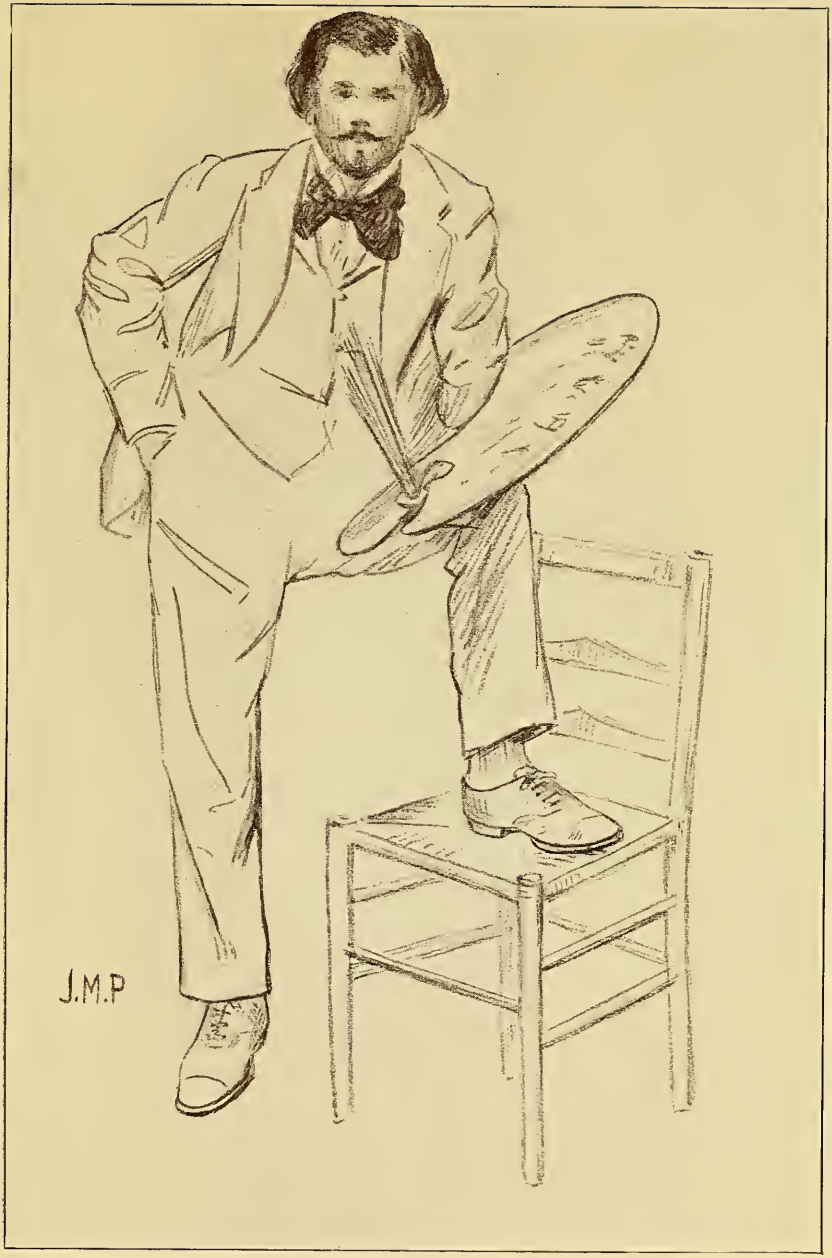
the only direction that presents itself; since there is no pleasant café life, and one cannot always afford a club—namely, the saloon bar, a public billiard-room, r, worst of all, in the card-playing which is the great curse of English student life.

CONCLUSION

Bohemian life in Paris—The charm of the café—Gradual change in one's tastes—The chez soi—Progress in one's work—New friends—Forced to return to England—A final visit to Gérome.

Bohemian life in Paris, once one begins to get out of the actual étudiant stage, changes very materially. It is still Bohemian, but of a different type. One can always rough it, "needs must when the devil drives," but not with the zest of youth when youth is flitting. In Paris it was curious how imperceptibly but surely one's habits gradually changed, as one progressed in one's work. There seemed to be less time and inclination for the irresponsible methods which were so characteristic of the early days of one's atelier life. Even in one's pleasures there was a certain commencement of sedateness; boisterous practical joking was losing its attraction. There was a desire to associate with men of more mature years and make new friends.

Café life in Paris never loses its charm for the artist; I mean, of course, for those who have had much experience of it, possibly because from being



"THESE ARRIVÉS, WHO IN THEIR TIME WERE AMONGST THE MOST DEVIL-MAY-CARE SPIRITS OF THE QUARTIER."

forced to practically live in cafés they become a sort of home for the lonely bachelor—a home where he can be alone or with company as he pleases. But after a time this life begins to appear a very empty sort of existence, and one has a feeling that a chez soi of one's own would be agreeable—a place where one can work and write one's letters in quiet privacy, surrounded by one's own pet comforts. This is the commencement of the second stage of Bohemian life in Paris —and I was now entering it.

Although still quite young I recollect I had a feeling akin to admiration for men I had worked with at the École who now had studios of their own, and who were starting portraits or big pictures for the Salon. These arrivés, who in their time were amongst the most devil-may-care spirits of the Quartier—always ready for the most outrageous blagues and boyish adventures—had become serious painters now their École days were past. It appeared to me as almost remarkable that so short a time could have made so great a difference. Many indeed had been seen wearing tall hats and clean collars. Their example was contagious, and I determined to try what I could do also apart from the hats and the collars.

I had spent four happy years in Paris studying, and I felt that it was time I should decide how best to turn the knowledge I had acquired to good account if possible. To remain in Paris per-

manently and endeavour to continue to live on my exiguous income, as I had hitherto done, tempted me greatly; but against this there was the feeling that what was possible as a student would no longer be so when one started attempting to make one's way seriously.

My friend and I had only taken our studio in the Passage Lathuile for a year, and our time was now up; and he was going to live away in the country, so my undecided state of mind will be the more understood. There is an old whist axiom, "when in doubt play trumps," and trumps for me meant Paris, for did I not practically owe my Art training to Paris? And Paris I should have decided on had not the Fates decided otherwise. Through the failure of a big bank I found myself suddenly placed in such bad circumstances that I had no option but to give up all idea of remaining in France. To return to London and endeavour to make a living out of my brush or pencil was the only course open to me, for I felt that the chances of doing so were better there than in Paris.

It was with no slight feeling of regret therefore that I had come to the decision, but stern necessity compelled it.

I went and bid Gérome "good-bye," and told him why I was leaving Paris. He was sympathy itself, and we had quite a long talk together; whilst to my delight he presented me with a parting souvenir in the shape of an autographed photo-

gravure of one of his most famous pictures, which I treasure amongst my most valued possessions, together with letters of introduction to two of his friends in London—Sir Frederick Leighton and John Everett Millais. As I made my way down from the studio, the memory of that day when, as a raw student, I had gone up there with Monsieur Thomas, full of trepidation as to the result of my visit, flashed through my mind. How much had happened during those four years, yet how quickly they had slipped away. I had, however, the consciousness that if I had played hard I had also worked hard; and that these years had therefore not been misspent.

As I closed the porte cochère behind me and found myself again on the familiar Boulevard, I felt a lump in my throat, for I realised that my Bohemian days as a student in Paris were ended.

INDEX

A

Abbaye de Thélème, The, 117
Absconding American, 193
Adventure, an unpleasant, 61
Allais, Alphonse, 125
American student, my quarrel with, 46
Antique, studying in the, 20
Arlequins, 56
"Arrivés," 24, 261
Artist, an American at Marlotte, 190
Artists' colony in Montmartre, 120
Atelier, my entrée to, 40; practical jokes in, 47

B

Bal des Quatz Arts, 156; amazing indecency at, 162; the slave-dealer at, 166; an arrest in the morning, 168
Bénôit, Rue St, little restaurant in, 18
Bet, an amusing, 113
Billiards, playing for a pair of trousers, 200
Bohemianism in those days in Montmartre, 105; a mystery of, 105; funny incident in, 106; some strange examples of Bohemianism in, 230
Bompard, 47
Bonaparte, Rue, 11
Brasseries and cafés in Montmartre, 119; impressions of one, 119
Bréda, Rue, a hot-bed of vice, 119
Buci, Rue de, artists' rendezvous in, 17
Buland, 47
Bullier bal, 67

C

Cabanel, 20
Café life in Paris, 260
Caran d'Ache, 125
Caricature of an American, 191
Carrier-Belleuse, 96
Chabot, colour merchant, 50
Chairs, amusing jeu d'esprit, 140
Chartran, 96
Chat Noir, Cabaret du, 121; the early reunions at, transformation of, 121; its removal, 122; its new habitation, 124; its distinguished habitués, 125; imitation Chat Noirs 125
Cherchez la femme, 258
"Chinois sur le zinc," a, 219
Child, a dead, pathetic incident, 240
Ciceri, 178
Clichy, Place, 141; Avenue de, 141
Cocottes, 119
Concierges, different types of, 14
Cold cream, an amusing incident, 129
"Collages," 151

INDEX

Coolness of the Parisian, amusing incident, 152
Cormon, 96
Corvées, irksome nature of, 45
Cours Yvon, 22

D

D'Ange, Baronne, 84
D'Isly, Hôtel, in the Rue Jacob, 83
Dagnan-Bouveret, 47
Degas, 96
Déjeuner, favourite places for, in the Quartier, 54
Déjeuners, cheap, 24
Delmet, 125
Divan Japonais in Rue Lepic, 218
Donnay, Maurice, 125
Door, the communicating, 85
Dowdeswell, Walter, 97
Drinking, 258
Duel with paint-brushes, 45; by arrangement, 227
Dupray, 96

E

École des Beaux Arts, 16
Élysée Montmartre, 117
Enfant Prodigue, l', 125
English dancers, at the Folies Bergères, 101
English girl, joke on, 102
Épopée, l', 125
Eugénie, 88; rendezvous with, 89

F

Fair Neighbour, my, 22
Faux ménages, 149
Florist, the, at Montigny, 192
Fontainebleau, forest of, 173; palace of, 194; lost in, 195; joke on artist in café, 197
Fontaine St Georges, Rue, my apartment in, 139
Fontenay aux Roses, 76
Food, the, in Hôtel Marlotte, 174
Frail sisterhood, 119
Frochot, Rue, lady living in, 153
Furniture, buying, 84, 140

G

Gambling debts, 258
Garçon pianist, 219
Gare St Lazare, unusual scene in, 213
Gérome, J. L., 6, 20, 51; his popularity, 52; his kindly nature, 53, 96, 262
Gervex, 96
Gorge aux Loups, love-making in, 185
Goupil, old, 96
Goûter, the, 24

H

Harrison, 47
Helleu, 47
"Her," 183
Humbert, 96

I

Inconnue, my lovely, 188
Interest, legal limit to, in France, 255, 257

J

Jacob, Rue, 50
Jealous woman, a, 241
Jephson, Charlie, 97, 123
Jeu au bouchon, le, on billiard-table, 175
Journey, an eventful, 208
Jouy, Jules, 125
Julians, 58, 59

L

La Belle Laure; her tragic end, 98
La Gandara, 47
La Grande Louise, 98
La Grenouillère, 76
La Sagatore, 98
La Source, café de la, 67

INDEX

La Thangue, 47
Laval, Rue de, 125
Lehmann, 20
Leighton, Sir Frederick, 263
"Liaisons" as compared with "collages," 151
Lion, d'Or, the, 126
Lion, lady and the, 131
"Logements de garçon," 13
Louis, looking for one, 66
Louvre, copying at, 57
Love, my first affair, 73
Lyon, Gare de, adventure on way to, 204

M

MacNab, 125
Maîtresses, 149
Marlotte, 171; inn at, 172, 174, 175
Married woman and young student, 250
Masse, the, 42
Massier, the, 42
Masson, A., 125
Meeting, an unexpected, 235
Memory, a lapse of, 154
Messier, Monsieur, his house at Auteuil, 3
Meudon, 75
Militaire, the pas, 63
Military discipline, 214
Millais, John Everett, 263
Minor, no claim against, 257
Models, 48, 98, 101, 120, 144, 148, 151, 153
Money-lenders' agents, 254
Mont de Piété, the, 253
Montigny, 171, 179
Montmartre, cafés in, 110, 216
Moret, a visit to, 203, 214
Moulin de la Galette, 117; dancing at, 118
Mouloya, 125
Music, advent of, in Montmartre, 217
Musician, a born, 220

N

New-comer, the, at Marlotte, 180
Night, first in new room, 85
Notre Dame de Lorette, Quartier de, 119
Nouveau, ragging the, 43
Nouvelle Athènes, the, 110

O

Omnibus, amateur conjurer in, 68
Ouvrières petites, 60

P

Painters, open-air, 172
Panels, movable in the hotel at Marlotte, 173
Panthéon, the café of, 67
Passage Lathuille, 141; my study in, 142
"Patron," the, his visits to atelier, 50
Penne, O. de, 171, 176, 183, 192
"Petit rentier," 91
Petit vin at Marlotte, 174
Picnic, impromptu, 43
Picture, my first sale of, 91
Pille, 125
Place Blanche, café on; funny incident at, 111
Place Pigalle, life in, 112
Police, Préfecture de, 193; Commissaire of, 224
Portrait, my first commission, 92
Portraiture, my earliest effort at, 51
"Poseurs," 25
Practical joking at Auteuil, 27
Prince Imperial, my resemblance to, 31

Q

Quartier Latin, 11; rough-and-ready manners of, 55, 60

R

Rameau, Jean, 125
"Rapins," 24

INDEX

Rat Mort, the café of, 112
Rent of room, 84
Restaurant, eccentric, 56
Reuilly, Rue de, the factory in, 3, 128
Reversion, borrowing on, illegal, 257
Rivière, Henri, 125
Robinson, 75
Rochefoucauld, la, aphorism of, 150; café de la, 95; habitués of, 96; end of, 104
Rochefoucauld, Rue de la, 83
Rose, ma petite amie, 73; excursions with, 75, 76; joke on, 78; her last letter, 81

S

St John's wood, as compared with Montmartre, 223
St Michel, Boulevard, 60
Saint Antoine, La tentation de, 125
Salis, Rodolphe, 121
Salon, sending in to, 130
"Saved," 233
Seine, Rue de, hotel in, 14
Shrimps, funny incident, 77
Smoking in carriages on French railways, 208; unpleasantness in, 211
Solomon J. Solomon, 47
Soufflet, the, 67
Spider and the fly, 254
Stanhope Forbes, 47
Stott, William, of Oldham, 17
Streets, joking in, 63, 64, 65, 66, 69
Student life in England, 258
Students, types of, 24, 25, 26
Studio district, 120
Studio, my, in Passage Lathuille, 142; impromptu déjeuners in, 143
Sundays en famille, 27
Supper, an impromptu, in studio, 222
Suresnes, a friture at, 76
Sureté, Inspector of the, 193
Swan, 47

T

Tapissière, a, 33
Thackeray, 54
Théâtre des Italiens, curious incident at, 30
Thirions, 54
Thomas, Alexandre, 3, 34
Thomas, Isidore, 3, 32, 127; painting his portrait, 134
Thomas, Madame, 34
Treasure, the hidden, 233
Tripp, Richard, 97
Trudaine, Avenue, my little friend in, 168

U

Usurers of the Quartier Latin, 253
Uzès, Rue d', 58, 59

V

Vachette, café, 67
"Vélocipède IV.," my nickname, 47
Ventriloquism, my effort at, and its result, 224, 225
"Vernissage," the, at the Salon, 133; looking for one's pictures, 135; lunch at Ledoyens, 137
Versailles, big fête at, 32
Visconti, Rue, lodgings in, 12
Vivienne, Rue, restaurant in, 87

W

Waiter, joke on, 57
Walrus, a human, 190
Waxworks, joke in, 70
Whistler, 96
Wide World Magazine, story from, 193
Willette, 125
Work, early hours of, in atelier, 49
Wolff, Albert, 96

Y

Yvon, Adolphe, 4

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